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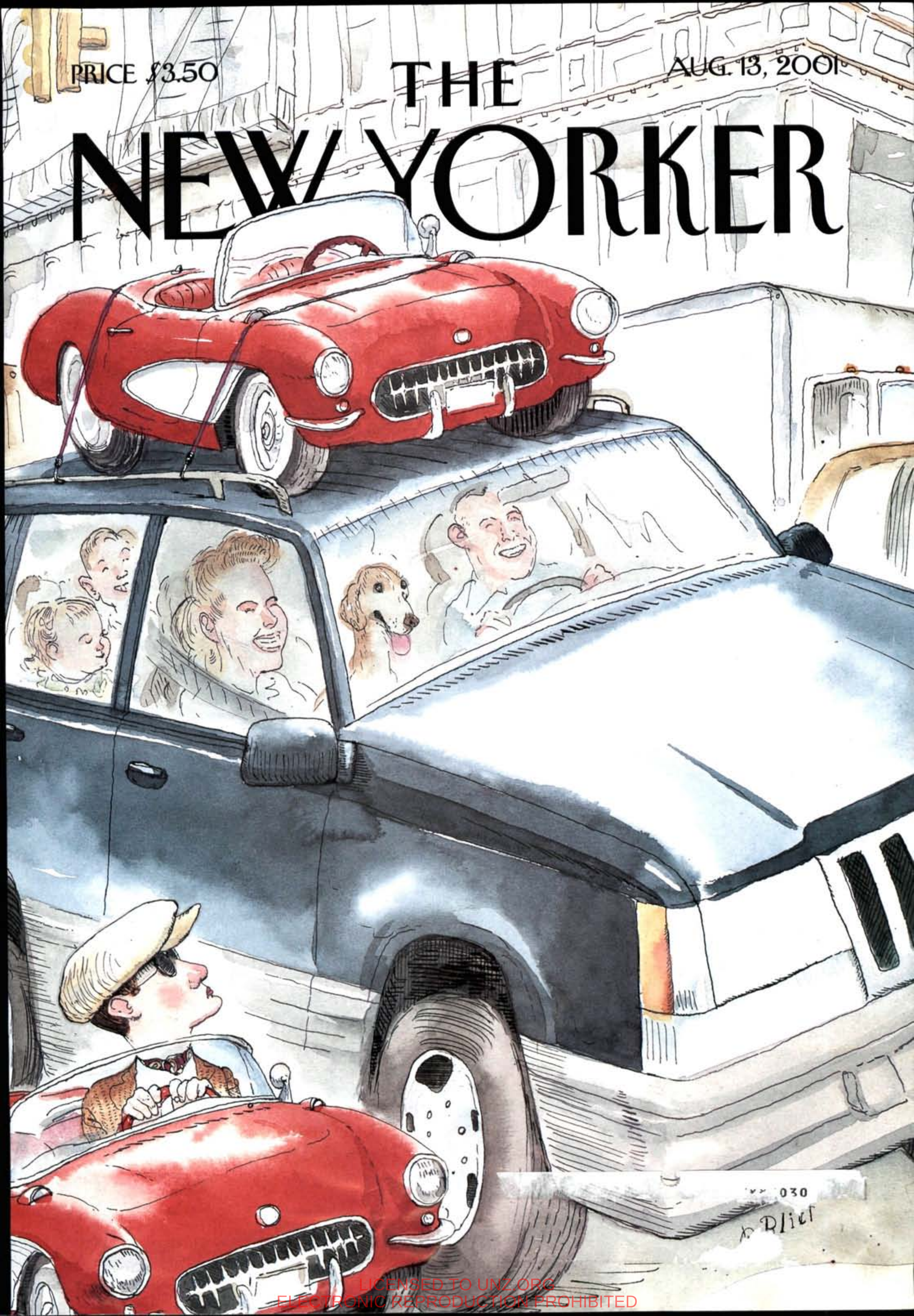
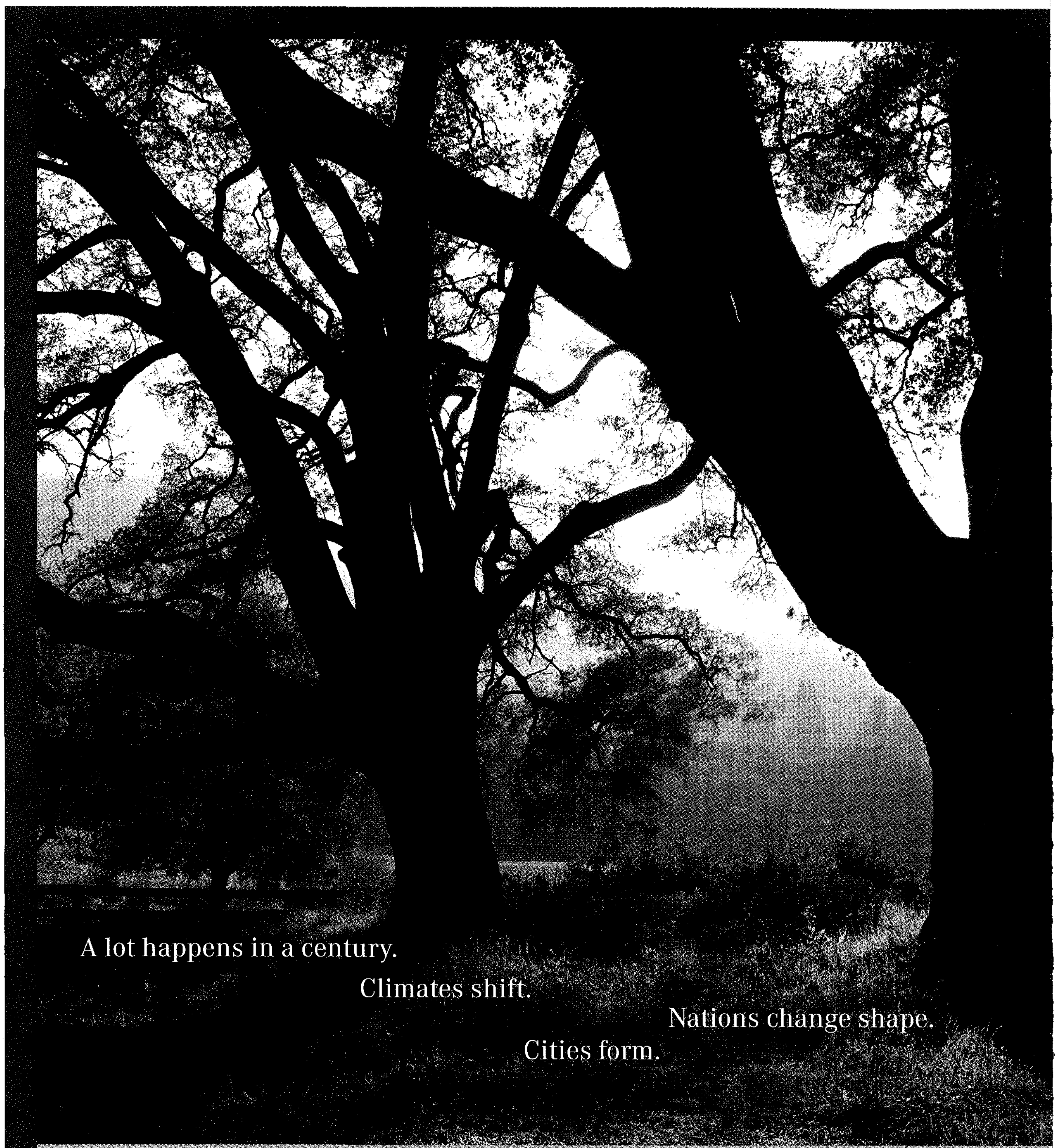
THE NEW YORKER

AUG. 13, 2001

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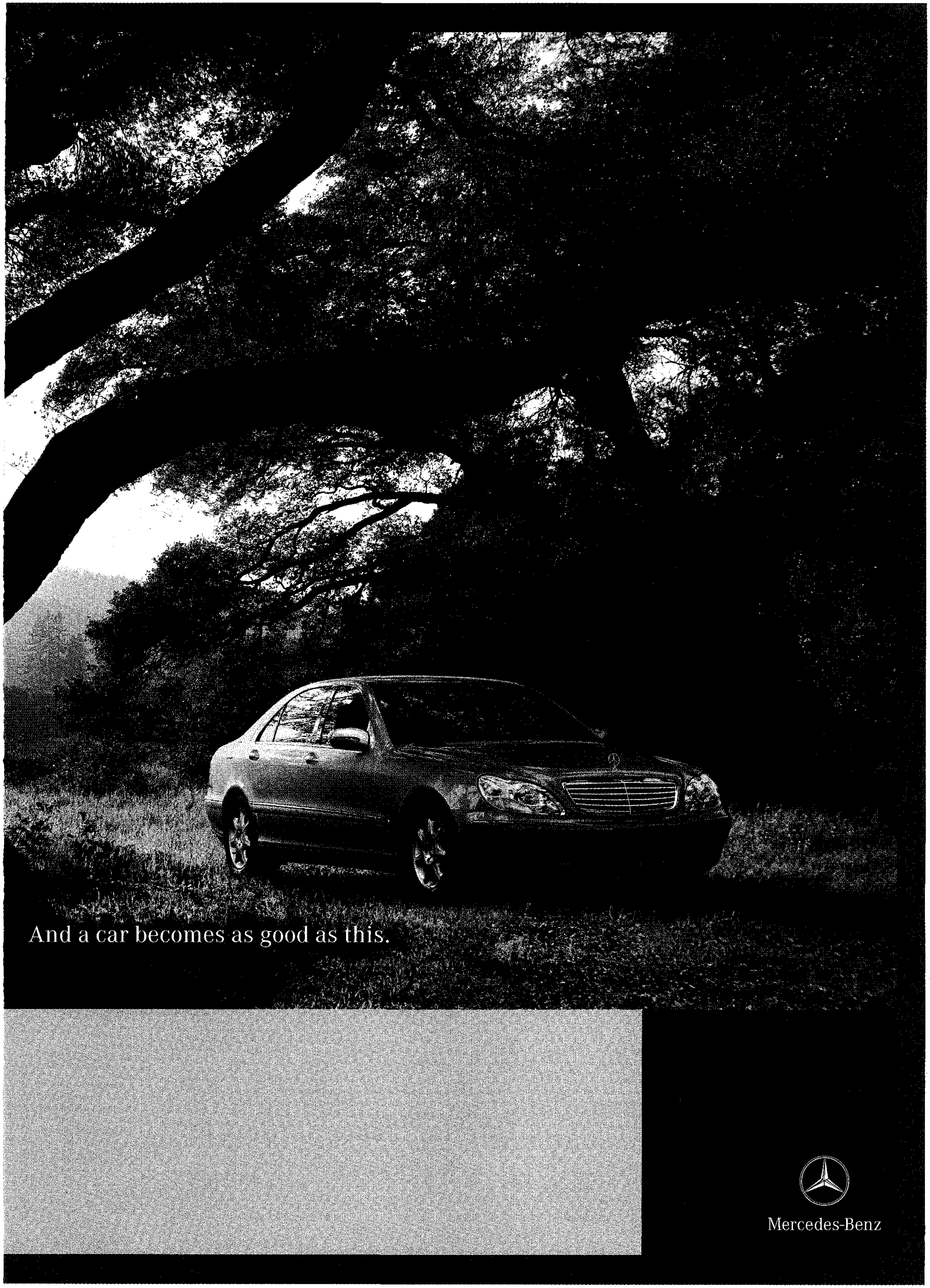
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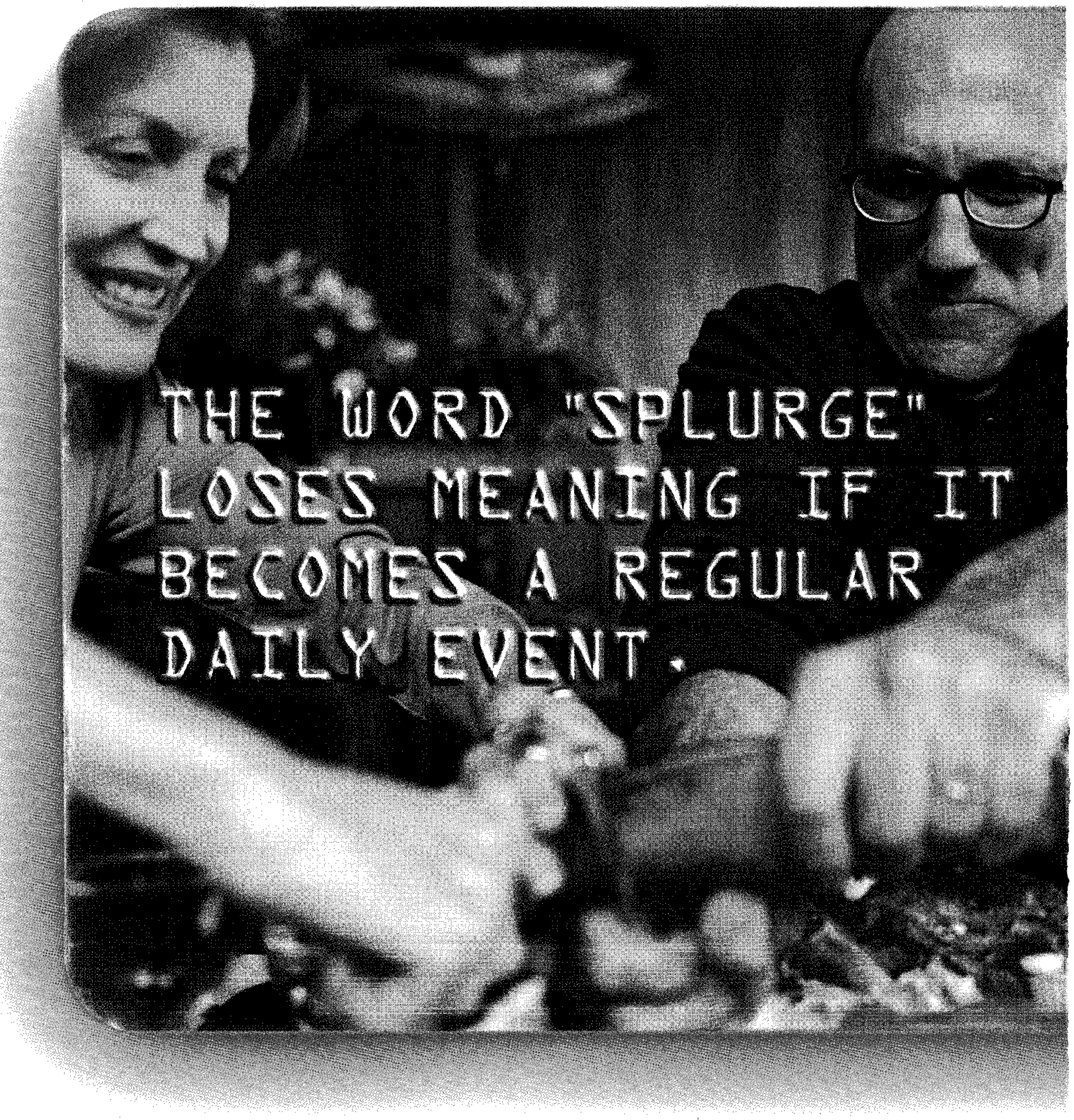
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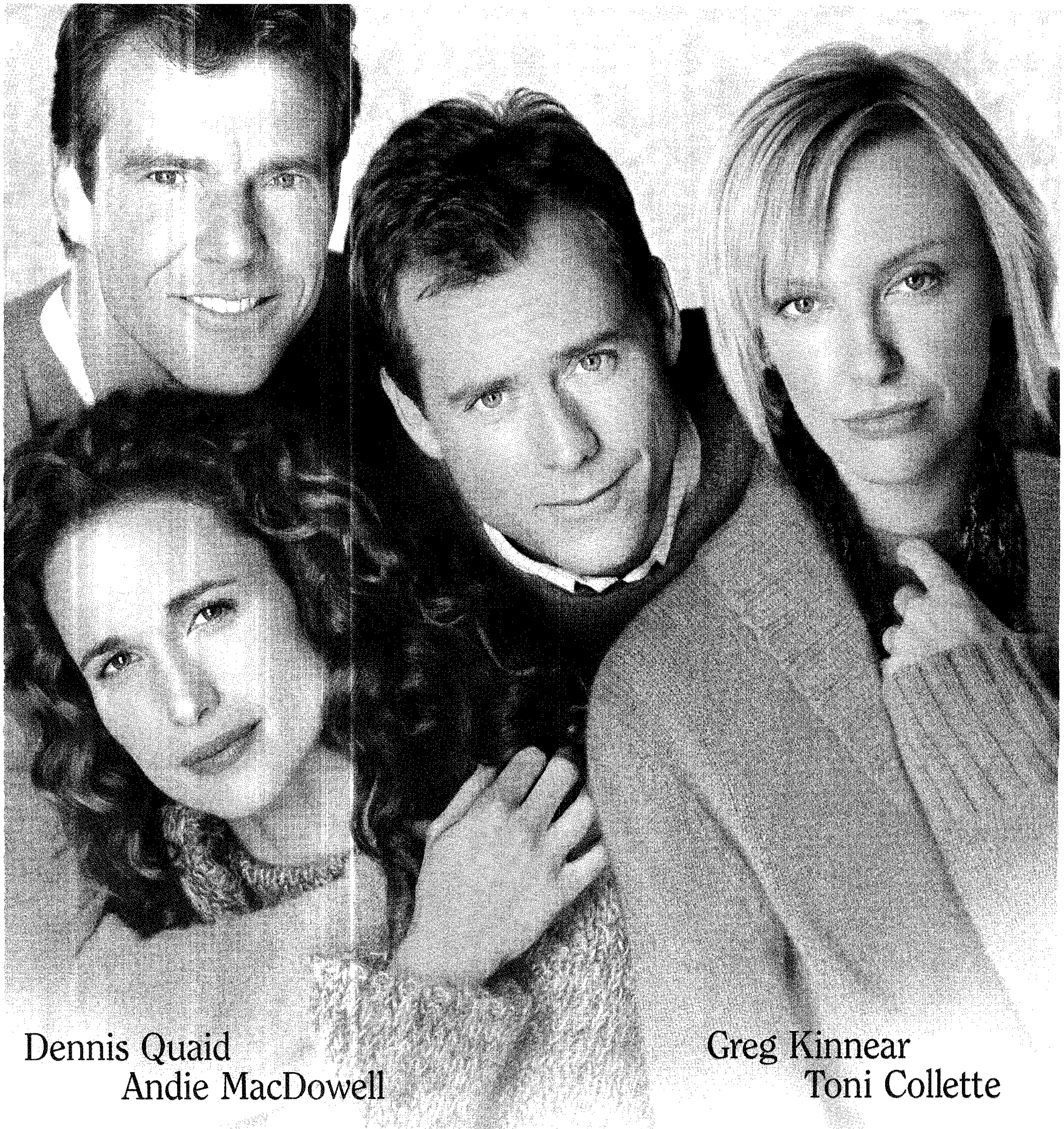

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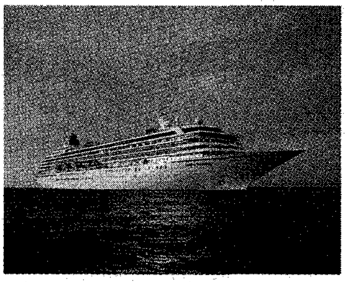

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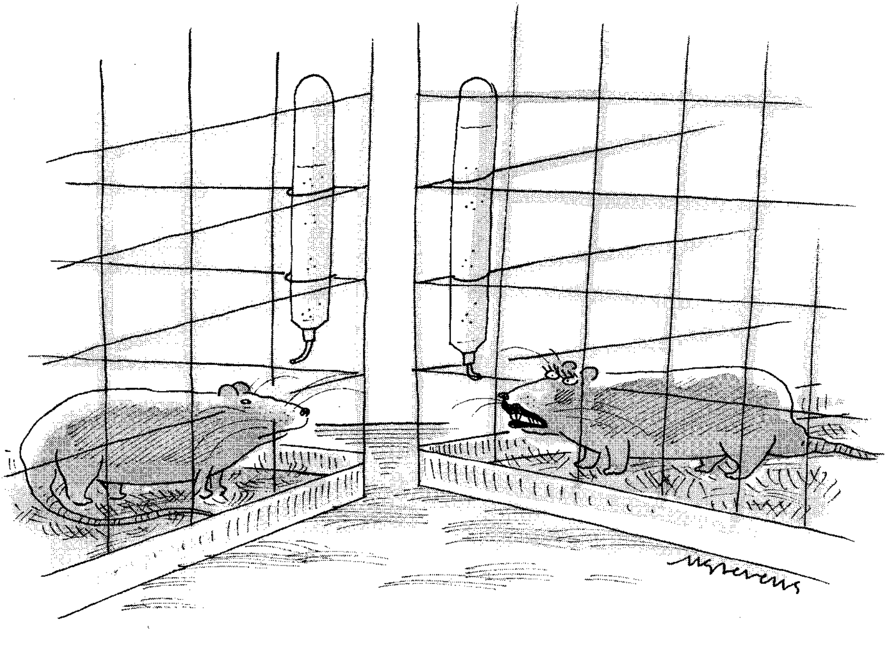

"They've got me doing cosmetics research."

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THE MAIL

FREE KATHY BOUDIN?

Why should Kathy Boudin, a terrorist and convicted murderer who, Elizabeth Kolbert reminds us, will have her first parole hearing later this month, be freed ("The Prisoner," July 16th)? Her crimes betray a willingness to risk the lives of innocent people for the sake of a cause, and nothing in Kolbert's article indicates that she has really changed. Weatherman, to which she belonged, used bombs to make its statements. Unlike other sixties radicals who burned out or matured, Boudin became more violent and dangerous, taking part in 1981 in the armed robbery of a Brink's truck, in the course of which three people were killed, including two police officers. As a veteran cop, I'm shocked that she might be released, and even more incredulous that reasonable, law-abiding people would be sympathetic.

Lieut. Michael J. Gorman
New York Police Department
Whitestone, N.Y.

As a fifty-year resident of Rockland County—the site of the robbery in which Boudin participated—I read Kolbert's article with interest. The question of when Boudin should be freed was addressed by the judge who sentenced her, who said at the time, "When we negotiated and bargained for the imposition of a minimum period, I settled upon a period of time that I honestly believe was right, that represented a just result. I did that fully recognizing the likelihood that the parole authorities would release Miss Boudin at the expiration of that period." That period, twenty years, is up. A just result would be to free her now.

Rev. George M. Houser
Pomona, N.Y.

After twenty years, Boudin can only say, "I was responsible for not being responsible," and that she had believed that, as a white woman, she did not have a "right to know anything" about the plans of her accomplices in the Black Liberation Army. Yet, undeterred by the bomb blast that killed three of her comrades eleven years earlier, this educated woman chose to join a group that openly talked about robbery ("expropriation") and killing police officers ("pigs"), and to help with the getaway. Under any notion of morality and causation, Boudin is directly responsible for murdering three men and devastating their families. Against this fact, her crafted formulation is nothing but empty talk.

R. H. Levine
Swarthmore, Pa.

I don't condone what Boudin did, but Weatherman can be seen as an extension, albeit an extreme one, of the protests by millions of people who felt, at the time, that the government was out of control. The Vietnam War left many young Americans bitter and confused, not only about the atrocities being committed halfway around the world in their name but about the fact that too many of those who were sent to fight and die were poor people and people of color. The selfishly criminal aspect of Weatherman, which seems so obvious in hindsight, was not always so clear.

Michael Monagan
Santa Monica, Calif.

Would the article about Boudin have had the same balanced tone if she had been involved in blowing up abortion clinics and in the murder of doctors instead of policemen? By all means, apply the law: if Boudin is eligible for parole, proceed with the hearing, and if the condition for parole is good behavior, then let her argue for it. But to apply that law it is not necessary to deny the extent of her guilt, or the right of the surviving family members to continue their search for justice by opposing her release.

Paul Sohar
Warren, N.J.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036-6592. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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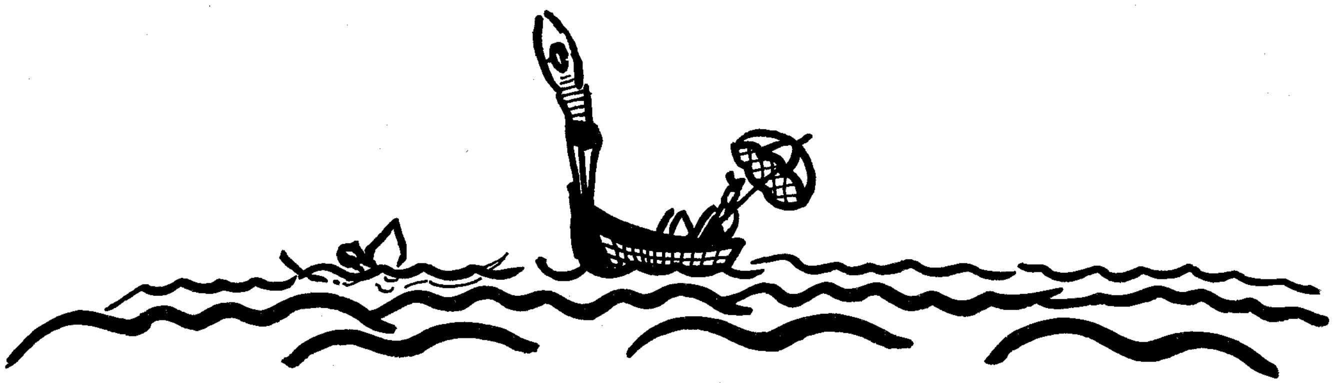

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

BLUEPRINT SERIES
The Ontological Theatre's annual festival for emerging directors opens Aug. 8 at 8, with works staged by Chris Ajemian, Michael Comlish, Kelly Cooper, and Alice Reagan. The series runs through Aug. 19. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL
Experimental, multidisciplinary, and multimedia performances at numerous venues on the Lower East Side, by troupes from sixteen U.S. cities and seventeen countries. Aug. 10-26. (For tickets, performance schedules, and other information, call 420-8877 or 888-374-6436.)

THE SEAGULL
Mike Nichols directs Chekhov's play, the second production in the New York Shakespeare Festival's outdoor season. In previews through Aug. 11. Opens Aug. 12 at 8. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park, near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750.)

URINETOWN
Mark Hollmann and Greg Kotis's musical comedy about a city in the throes of ecological disaster, starring John Cullum, has moved to Broadway. John Rando is the director. In previews. (Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

WEDDING PICTURES
The Vital Theatre company presents a comedy by Judy Korotkin, about a woman who calls off her wedding after her grandmother dies. Stephen Sunderlin is the director. Preview on Aug. 9. Opens Aug. 10 at 8. (432 W. 42nd St., 3rd Fl. 592-0129.)

OPENED RECENTLY

THE AMERICAN LIVING ROOM DIRECTING CABARET
The annual summer series presents two-night-only stagings of short works directed by emerging artists. The festival continues through Sept. 2. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202.)

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL
A kind of "My Fair Bat Boy," in which a half-bat, half-man—memorably played by Deven May—emerges from his childhood cave into adult bourgeois life. But the musical world he enters is one of darkness, not light, of ironies, not idealism, where plot is a history of abdications and song extolls the emptiness of all the standard credos—Christianity, family, community, love, redemption—and of the musical form itself. It's a jejune vision, but a smart, playful, and funny one nonetheless. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/9/01.) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

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			8	9	10	11
12	13	14				

BAT THEATRE COMPANY
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BLAST!
A musical extravaganza, which evolved from the drum-and-bugle corps Star of Indiana. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

BLUE
In Charles Randolph-Wright's memory play, a trumpet player named Reuben Clark (Hill Harper) returns to his childhood in a small South Carolina town, where his family owns the only African-American funeral parlor, run by his beautiful, narcissistic, upwardly mobile mother, Peggy (Phylicia Rashad). Unfortunately, Reuben's entire transition to manhood—his leaving home, his rejection of the trumpet, his therapy, and his final coming to terms with his mother—takes place offstage. What we are left with is a patina of literacy and boulevard lyricism but no internal life. (7/9/01) (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100. Closes Sept. 9.)

DOWN SOUTH
In a comedy by Doug Field, the Rattlestick Theatre takes aim at the Cuban-missile crisis. (224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 9.)

42ND STREET
As a domineering diva who breaks her ankle before the big opening night, the wonderful Christine Ebersole steals the show in this revival of the 1980 tap musical based on the 1933 film. But it has to be said: it was probably easy to do. As the young chorine who steps in to save the day, Kate Levering doesn't have enough star power to shine above the legions of hoofers who crowd the stage, and Michael Cumpsty, as the gruff director, is sorely miscast. Still, if this sort of show is your cup of tea, the songs are wonderful and the dancing is fine—just know that the cup is not quite full. (Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

GEORGE GERSHWIN ALONE
A one-man portrait with music, written and performed by Hershey Felder and directed by Joel Zwick. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 9.)

HELLO MUDDAH, HELLO FADDUH!
A musical by Doug Bernstein and Rob Krausz, inspired by the Allan Sherman song of the same name, which follows the relationship of a couple from their childhood days at Camp Grenada to marriage in suburbia to retirement in Florida. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 239-6200.)

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
Outdoor performances of "Romeo and Juliet," directed by Terrence O'Brien. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 845-265-9575. Closes Sept. 5.)

IF YOU EVER LEAVE ME, I'M GOING WITH YOU!
From the husband-and-wife acting and comedy-writing team Renee Taylor and Joseph Bologna, a play about their thirty-six-year relationship—which has included a wedding reception on "The Merv Griffin Show" and the renewal of their marriage vows five times. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

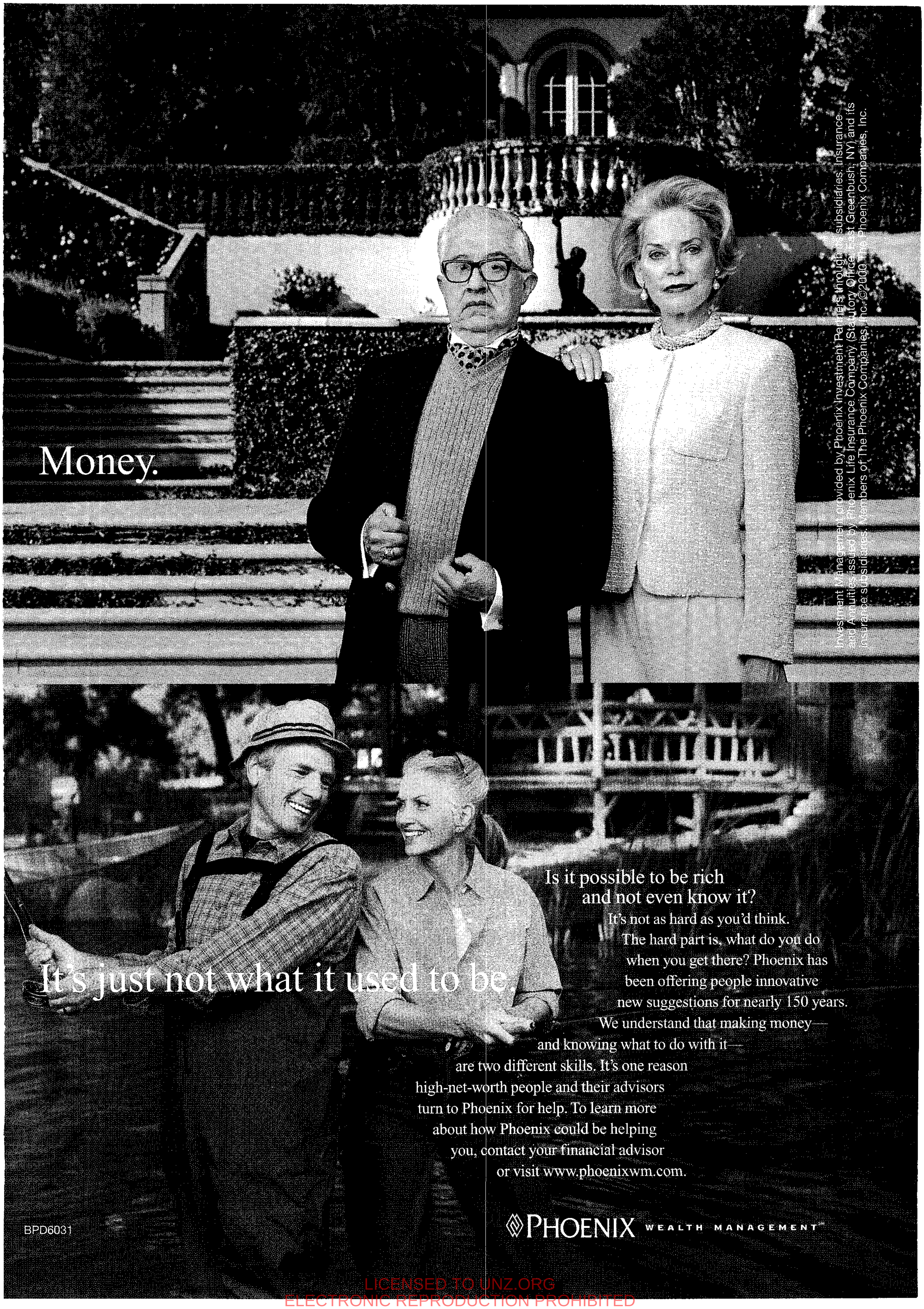
I SING!
A musical comedy about postgraduate life in New York City, by Eli Bolin, Sam Forman, and Benjamin Salka. (Maverick, 307 W. 26th St. 239-6200.)

A LIFE
Fritz Weaver portrays an Irish civil servant nearing the end of his life, in Hugh Leonard's 1981 play. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Aug. 12.)

LOBBY HERO
In another era, the contrivances of Kenneth Lonergan's new play would have been called hokum. But because Lonergan is the writer and director of the moving and successful film "You Can Count on Me" and the author of the acclaimed plays "This Is Our Youth" and "The Waverly Gallery" the public is expecting him to aim high. He does, and misses. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 2.)

LOVE, JANIS
A musical play about Janis Joplin, built around her songs, writings, and interviews. Though it contains no new insight, it's a useful corrective to the drunken, drug-addicted legend, and the production is a fine one. Randal Myler directed with a sure eye for the telling detail, and the seven-member band really cooks. (Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

MAJOR BARBARA
Cherry Jones, as a major in the Salvation Army, and David Warner, as her rich munitions-manufacturer fa-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ther, Andrew Undershaft, square off in this revival of George Bernard Shaw's 1905 examination of the social order, under the direction of Daniel Sullivan. Shaw's merry-prankster ironies on the subjects of salvation and capitalism are no less timely today than they were a hundred years ago, but the play has built-in dramatic limits. When it comes to actual human beings, Shaw is perhaps too clever by half; one could say that there is nothing at stake but the future of humanity. Also with Zak Orth and Dana Ivey, who, as the practical matriarch of the Undershaft family, provides unknowingly witty commentary on the essential nature of family values. (7/30/01) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300. Closes Sept. 9.)

THE MOON IN VAIN

Rae C. Wright portrays the actress Irina Arkadina in the first installment of a triptych inspired by Chekhov's "The Seagull," set a year after the original play's end. Written by Ms. Wright and Lee Gundersheimer. Tuesdays through Thursdays, through Aug. 30. (Dixon Place, 309 E. 26th St. 532-1546.)

MR. PRESIDENT

Gerard Allesandrini has updated Irving Berlin's 1962 musical to reflect the current political scene. The show will run in repertory with Allesandrini's "Forbidden Broadway 2001: A Spoof Odyssey." (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The Aquila Theatre Company's version of Shakespeare's comedy, set in London in the sixties. (45 Bleecker Street Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 529-4530.)

Troupes from around the world converge on the Lower East Side for the New York International Fringe Festival.

SARA FANELLI

MUSIC FROM A SPARKLING PLANET

In Douglas Carter Beane's new play, a Drama Dept. production, three Philadelphia men in their late thirties whose lives are going nowhere try to reconnect with the innocence of their boyhood by tracking down a woman named Tamara Tomorrow, who used to introduce cartoons on a local TV show. Though the play is schematic at times, it isn't a wallow in nostalgia. Beane and the director, Mark Brokaw, don't make too much or too little of the characters' quest, and there is an admirable precision to the play's sadness and sweetness. With Josh Hamilton, T. Scott Cunningham, Ross Gibby, Michael Gaston, and the sparkling J. Smith-Cameron. (7/30/01) (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 12.)

THE PRODUCERS

High-camp heaven from Mel Brooks, who wrote the music and the lyrics for this monster-hit version of his 1968 movie—in which two scoundrels try to bilk their investors by staging a surefire failure, entitled "Springtime for Hitler." The performing centerpiece of the show is Nathan Lane, as the flamboyant huckster Max Bialystock; his kind of high-amperage panache is in limited supply these days, and both he and the excellent Matthew Broderick, as the hapless accountant Leo Bloom, deliver the mail. Expertly staged by Susan Stroman. (5/7/01) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

SAINT LUCY'S EYES

Ruby Dee portrays a back-room abortionist in civil-rights-era Memphis, in an encore staging of Bridgette A. Wimberly's drama. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 2.)

SHUT UP AND LOVE ME

A limited-run encore engagement of the performance artist Karen Finley's latest examination of sexuality. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Closes Aug. 25.)

SIX GOUMBAS AND A WANNABE

A group of friends from the same Brooklyn neighborhood arrange a reunion after fifteen years apart, in a comedy by Vincent Gogliormella. (Players, 115 MacDougal St. 239-6200.)

STONES IN HIS POCKETS

Marie Jones's play is set in an Irish village where a big-budget Hollywood movie is being made. Conleth Hill and Seán Campion play two extras in the movie and all thirteen other characters as well. Though the play has its clever ways when it comes to sending up both Hollywood and Irish mores, the stories told here aren't anything you haven't seen before. (4/16/01) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A THOUSAND CLOWNS

Tom Selleck is the eccentric Murray Burns, in a revival of Herb Gardner's 1962 comedy. John Rando is the director. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

TICK, TICK . . . BOOM!

The title represents the author Jonathan Larson's fear of time running out on his musical dreams, but it also plays as a spooky reminder that time did run out on him. (He died, at thirty-five, of an aortic aneurysm, just after the dress rehearsal of "Rent," his sprawling musical.) It's set on the eve of the composer's thirtieth birthday—his Walpurgisnacht—as he is caught between the pressures to succeed and to settle. Larson's ambition was to marry rock and roll to an up-to-the-minute Broadway-musical form, and this production, which has an orchestra of four and a slick, hardworking cast of three, shows him trying to adjust his goals to economic reality. Well directed by Scott Schwartz, and with Larson's plotline deftly reworked by David Auburn, it has a fetching modesty, and reveals Larson's idiosyncrasy, energy, and promise. What remains unresolved is whether he could have built on his lyric gifts to tell a proper story. Still, as a miniature testament to Larson's fervent heart, "Tick, Tick . . . Boom" has sinew and a winning sweetness. (7/9/01) (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

TOPDOG/UNDERDOG

In Suzan-Lori Parks's new play, two brothers who live together in a seedy room argue, comfort, and, as brothers will, provoke each other, with consequences that can perhaps be predicted—their names are Lincoln and Booth. And they are as different from each other as a tortoise and a hare: as Lincoln, a former three-card-monte dealer who is trying to turn his life around, Jeffrey Wright exhibits both shame and slyness, while Don Cheadle, as the younger, excitable Booth, is full of "scheming and dreaming." They are, under the direction of George C. Wolfe, wonderful to watch, but Parks's play contains too much clunky, overwritten exposition, and it keeps letting the air out of its own tires. (8/6/01) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Aug. 12.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA

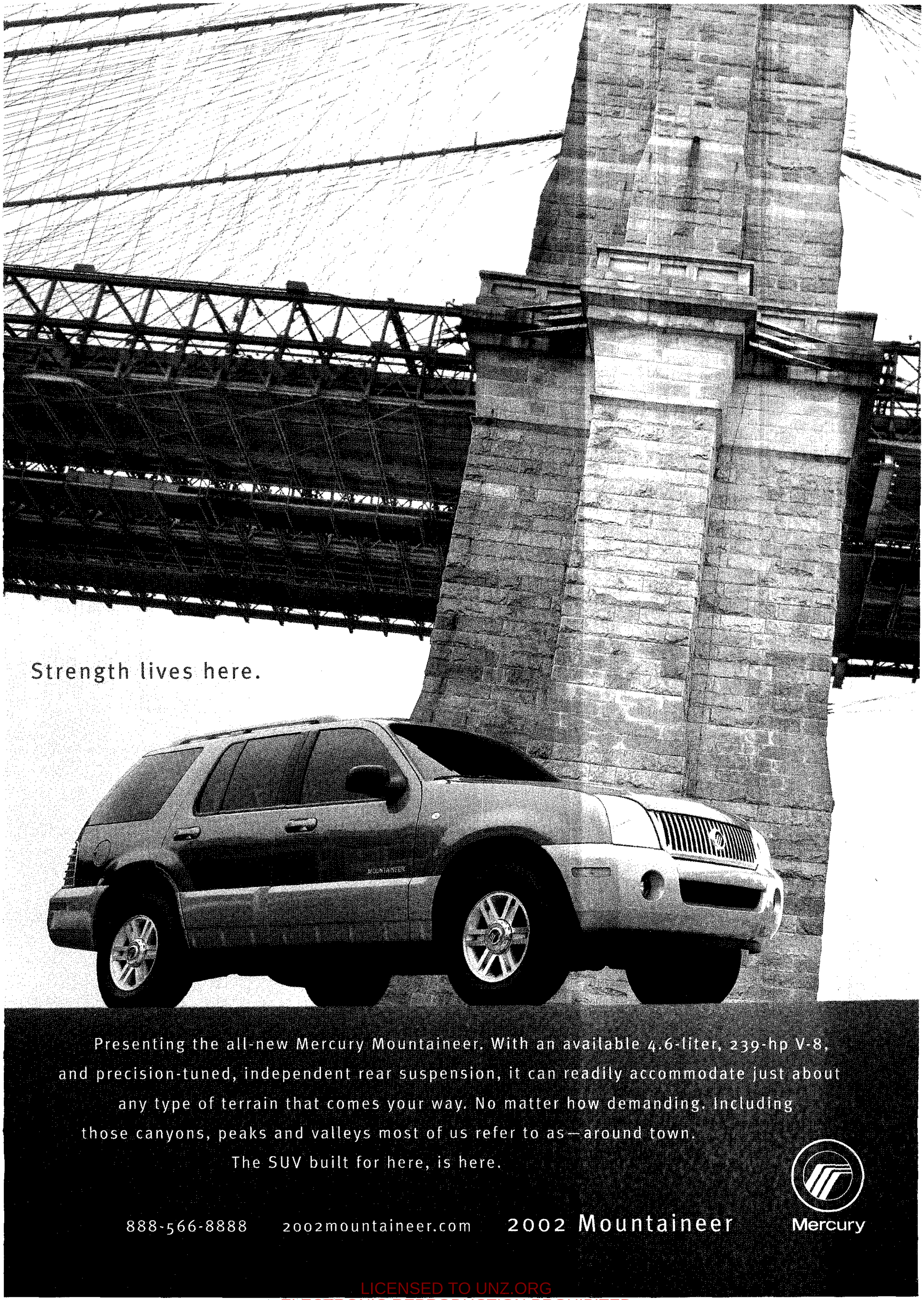
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.



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POP NOTES

IN SEARCH OF LOST TIME

Most pop stars are, by their very nature, masters of the ephemeral. Country and blues artists, on the other hand, tend to be more mindful of their past: they make frequent use of their genre's history, both as a sign of respect for earlier masters and as a way of lobbying for membership in the canon themselves.

The singer Gillian Welch and her guitarist partner David Rawlings look to classic folk, bluegrass, country, and blues for lyrics, for melodies, and—most importantly—for moods. **Time (The Revelator)** (Acony), Welch's third and strongest record, finds her archivist's instinct intact: the record's title is a takeoff on the Blind Willie Johnson gospel blues "John the Revelator," and the title song is a hypnotic country-rock ballad that brushes up against Taj Mahal's "She Caught the Katy." Elsewhere, Welch and Rawlings weave snatches of Elvis Presley and Steve Miller chestnuts into their own compositions; prove their onstage mettle with a live version of "I Want to Sing That Rock and Roll"; and deliver a stunning two-part song cycle ("April the 14th"/"Ruination Day") that links the assassination of Lincoln and the sinking of the Titanic.

Dan Hicks is one of pop music's most paradoxical delights: he has become a true original by digging to the deepest roots of American music—pre-rock folk, jazz guitar, Tin Pan Alley balladry, novelty songs, and the close harmonies of wartime vocal groups like the Andrews Sisters. The best album by Hicks and his backing group, the Hot Licks, is the 1971 live set "Where's the Money?," in which he moved seamlessly from quirky tour de force to quirky tour de force. Just last year, the singer emerged from years of obscurity with the surprisingly strong "Beatin' the Heat," and now there's a new concert record that proves that Hicks at nearly sixty is every bit as vital as he was three decades ago. **Alive & Lickin'** (Surfdog) includes staples like "The Buzzard Was Their Friend" and newer compositions like "My Cello," along with generous helpings of Hicks's droll between-song patter.

On three previous records, the Portland, Oregon-based guitarist Kelly Joe Phelps has turned in mysterious, forlorn covers of classic blues songs, along with blues-inflected originals. **Sky Like a Broken Clock** (Rykodisc) finds Phelps evolving in two directions at once: it's the first record on which he has recorded only original material, and it's also the first record on which he has worked with a full band. Both of these seem like promising developments, but the results are disappointing. Phelps has never been a particularly distinctive vocalist—his blues covers have worked mainly because of his astonishing slide work—and now that he has found his voice as a songwriter it turns out to be Tom Waits's voice, with a surfeit of impressionistic imagery and quirky characters. Worst, most of the songs here are glacially paced, plodding along in the six-minute range. Maybe the sky just needs winding.

—*Ben Greenman*

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.
CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.
CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.
DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.
THE DINNER PARTY
Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.
FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.
FOSSE
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. (Closes Aug. 25.)
THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.
KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
THE MUSIC MAN
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.
PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY
Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. (Closes Sept. 1.)
PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW
Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.
THE SYRINGA TREE
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.
THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.
TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

ELIOT FELD'S BALLET TECH

The company that co-founded the Joyce Theatre returns with two programs of revivals for its summer engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Aug. 6-11 at 8. Through Aug. 18.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE

The Israeli performance troupe Sheketak presents its signature blend of body percussion and dance on a bill with the Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats, who perform traditional thrilling maneuvers with apparent ease. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. Aug. 12 at 3.)

"LISA LEANN & TERRY DEAN PUT ON A DANCE SHOW"

The avant-garde has never been too interested in audience building, and Terry Dean Bartlett thinks that's a problem. So, a couple of years ago, he and Lisa Leann Dalton, both of the dance-action troupe Streb/Ringside, started a bimonthly showcase in the back of Galapagos, a Williamsburg night club. It was designed to draw newcomers to dance. But dance can be its own worst enemy. "There's been a definite trend in the last five years toward bad work," Bartlett says. "And if someone doesn't like dance and they came anyway and didn't like it—and felt stupid and didn't like feeling stupid—they're not going to come again. There's nothing worse than bad modern dance, except maybe bad comedy." Bartlett and Dalton came up with a solution: they limit their eight performers to seven minutes apiece and vary the styles—from campy to acrobatic to abstract modern. Most important, they enlist "people *we'd* want to go see." This week, that includes the hosts, Antonio Ramos, formerly of the Stephen Petronio and Mark Dendy modern-dance companies, the ubiquitous downtowner Stacy Dawson, and the swift and always delicious Miguel Gutierrez, of the John Jasperse Company. (Galapagos, 70 N. Sixth St., between Wythe and Kent Aves. 718-782-5188. Aug. 10-11 at 9.)

LINCOLN CENTER OUT OF DOORS

Free alfresco dance events. Aug. 8 at 10:30 A.M. and 8: Janavak National Folk Dance Company. (Robertson Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 8 at 8: Mark Morris Dance Group. (Damrosch Park.) ♦ Aug. 9 at 6:45: Tina Croll and James Cunningham. (South Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 10 at 10:30 A.M. and 8 and Aug. 11 at 8: Cleo Parker Robinson Dance. (Damrosch Park.) ♦ Aug. 14 at 10:30 A.M.: Monte/Brown Dance. (Robertson Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 14 at 6:30: Arthur Aviles Typical Theatre. (South Plaza.) (For more information, call 875-5391.)

"RIVERDANCE—ON BROADWAY"

Not the Lord of the Dance with his shirt off and the leather truss. The other one. (Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. 307-4100. Aug. 8 and Aug. 11 at 2 and 8, Aug. 9-10 and Aug. 14 at 8, and Aug. 12 at 3. Through Aug. 26.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL

Aug. 7-10 at 8, Aug. 11 at 2 and 8, and Aug. 12 at 2: Doug Varone and Dancers. ♦ Aug. 9-10 at 8:15, Aug. 11 at 2:15 and 8:15, and Aug. 12 at 5: Joe Goode Performance Group. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

VERIZON MUSIC FESTIVAL

Like a miniaturized version of a major jazz extravaganza, this gathering presents a tiny—but choice—slice of just about all forms of the music. The avant garde gets its due in performances by the **Mark Dresser** trio and **Tim Berne's Hard Cell** threesome (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts., Aug. 7 at 8), the rejuvenated partnership of the sixties icons **Archie Shepp** and **Roswell Rudd** with **Andrew Cyrille, Grachan Moncur,** and **Reggie Workman** (Pace Downtown Theatre, Aug. 8 at 8), and the **Sun Ra Arkestra** (Pace Downtown Theatre, Aug. 9 at 8). The popular faction is represented by **Al Jarreau, George Duke,** and **Rachelle Ferrel** (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St., Aug. 8 at 8) and **Ray Charles** and **Natalie Cole** (City Center, 131 W. 55th St., Aug. 9 at 8). The jazz event of the summer winds up the festival—a free concert featuring the **Big 3 Palladium Orchestra** with **Giovanni Hidalgo** and **Tito Puente, Jr.; James Carter's Chasin' the Gypsy** band; the majestic tenor saxophonist **Wayne Shorter** and his new acoustic quartet; and **Abbey Lincoln,** the doyenne of jazz singers. (Columbia University Quadrangle, Aug. 11 at 4.) (For more information, visit www.festivalproductions.net, or call 307-7171.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE

The alfresco concerts continue. Aug. 9 at 7:30: An afternoon of twenty-first-century bossa nova, with **Bebel Gilberto.** ♦ Aug. 10 at 7: **Bela Fleck and the Flecktones.** After more than a decade of making albums filled with bizarre musical juxtapositions (try funky bluegrass), Fleck, a baby-faced banjo veteran with truly mind-boggling technique, continues showcasing the banjo—never the sexiest of instruments—in unexpectedly inspired contexts. With **Keb' Mo'.** The Grammy-winning acoustic-blues throwback who was once a fusion guitarist called Kevin Moore has a new album, "Big Wide Grin," which consists of covers of popular hits from the sixties and seventies. A benefit concert. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 360-2777.)

LINCOLN CENTER OUT OF DOORS

The free late-summer festival on the grounds of Manhattan's temple of high culture. Aug. 11 at

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May 2001

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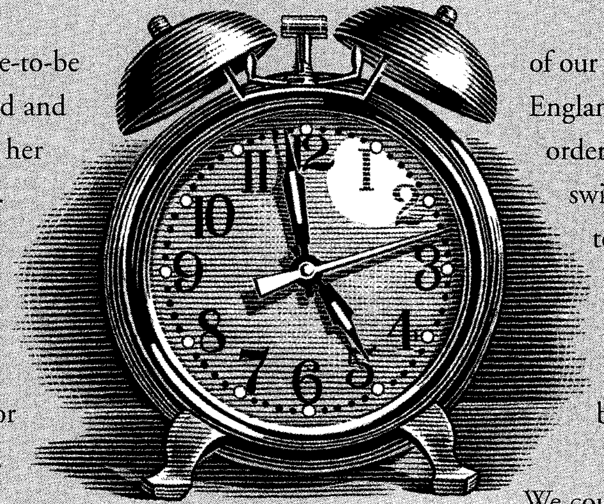

Not long ago, a bride-to-be in South Carolina called and asked if we would give her a wake-up call at 5 a.m. Seems the mansion-turned-hotel where she was staying didn't offer that courtesy, and she didn't want to be late for her wedding. Naturally, we obliged.

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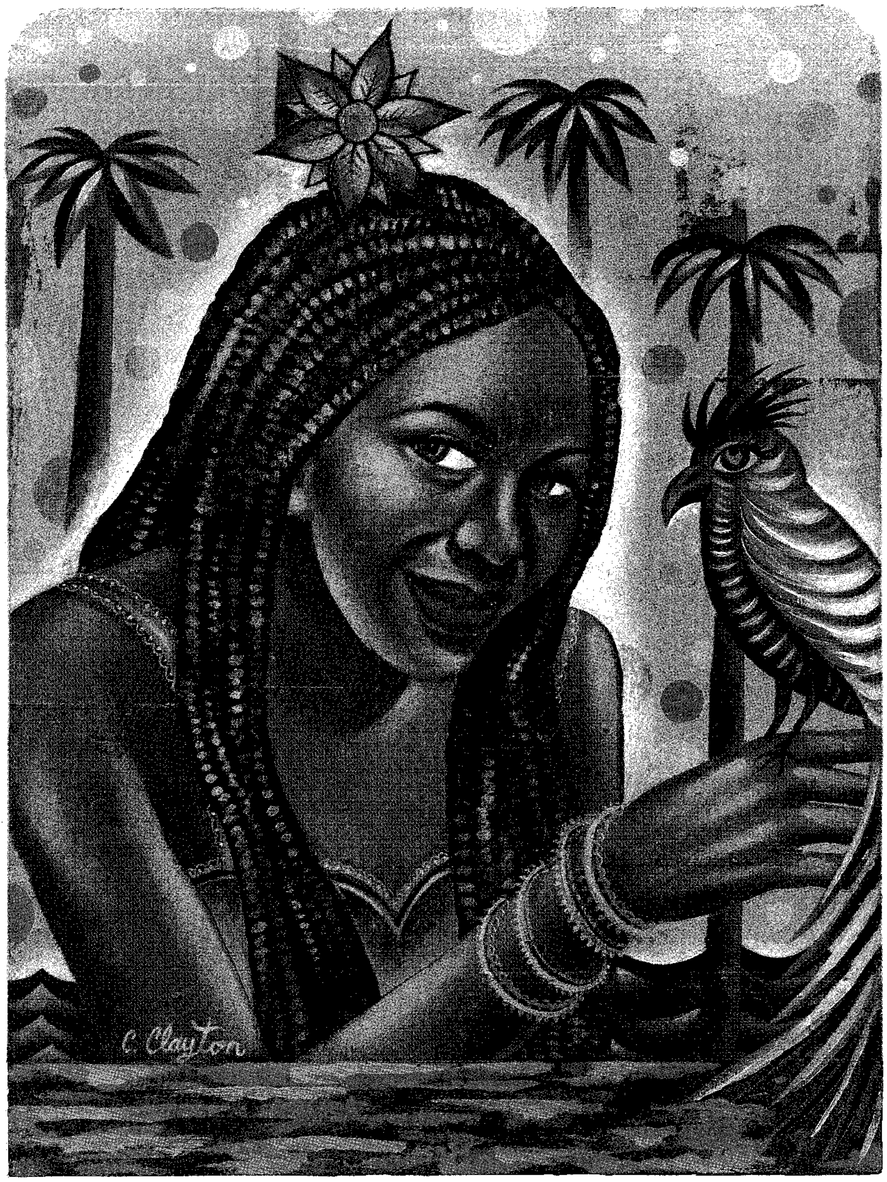


Fantcha, the Cape Verdean vocalist, at Lincoln Center Out of Doors.

3:30: The delightful Cape Verdean singer **Fantcha,** a protégée of Cesaria Evora, stops by with songs from her latest album, "Viva Mindelo." (Fountain Plaza.) Aug. 14 at 8:15: A Country Dance Party offers the chance to swing your partner. (Damrosch Park.) (For more information about the festival, call 875-5108.)

MELISSA ETHERIDGE
Engaging in a very public recovery campaign, Melissa Etheridge is rebounding from her oft-documented breakup with her longtime partner, Julie Cypher. She has a new tell-all book, "The Truth Is," and a new album, the purposely provocative "Skin." While it's admirable that Etheridge has chosen to exorcise her personal demons through work instead of wallowing in self-pity, one has to wonder if this is the most aesthetically rewarding way to go about it. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. Aug. 11-14 at 8.)

SADE
After a long spell of enigmatic inactivity, the sultry Nigerian-born, London-bred chanteuse returns with her gorgeously understated blend of sophisticated pop. (Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Aug. 13 at 7:30.)

MAXWELL
The soul singer with the buttery tenor kicks off seven nights of concerts in seven different venues (see Irving Plaza, below) to promote his long-awaited third album, "Now." (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 531-5305. Aug. 14 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S.
73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Aug. 10: The local blues-rocker **Dana Fuchs.** Aug. 11: This downtown nightspot closes its doors with a farewell concert featuring **Hiram Bullock, Bill Perry, Bobby Bell,** and many others.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Aug. 7-8: The Word is a band featuring the keyboardist **John Medeski,** the **North Mississippi Allstars,** and the pedal steel guitarist **Robert Randolph.** Aug. 13: **Maxwell** (see Concerts).

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Aug. 8-9: With his veteran British New Wave band Squeeze on hiatus again, **Glenn Tilbrook** hits the road. Aug. 9 at the late show: The **Black Rebel Motorcycle Club.** Aug. 13: **Varnaline** is the indie-rock collective led by the guitarist Anders Parker. His latest effort, the aptly titled "Songs in a Northern Key," was recorded during the winter in Vermont and upstate New York. The album is spare and clean, and as welcome as a January sunrise.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Aug. 11: **Daryl Sherman,** a vastly underrated vocalist and pianist, may not have learned every standard worth knowing, but don't bet on stumping her anytime soon. This New York treasure will be joined, separately, by three of the most accomplished mainstream guitarists—**Bucky Pizzarelli, Gene Bertoncini,** and **Joe Cohn**—throughout her engagement. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 12: The **Ron Carter** quartet and the **Russell Malone** quartet. Modern acoustic bassists everywhere can thank Carter for putting their instrument on the map. After high-profile experience that found him playing, either live or in the studio, with practically every major jazz figure of the past forty years, Carter is now as recognizable a name as the giants he's worked for. / Having paid his dues with the likes of Harry Connick, Jr., and Diana Krall, the guitarist Malone is stepping out on his own. He's a graceful stylist as well as a fluent technician; if only he'd stress the former attribute rather than the latter.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Aug. 12: The **Kenny Garrett** quartet. Much like his former boss Miles Davis, the saxophonist Garrett has warmed to R. & B. and pop. While that doesn't thrill those enchanted by the ripsnorting improviser who shredded the air with tensile post-bop solos on such nineties recordings as "Triology" and "Pursuance," Garrett marches only to his own (funky) drummer. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul,** who officially opens the club's new quarters—a cozy basement space with swell sightlines and a sound system designed in part by Paul—on Aug. 13.

UP OVER JAZZ CAFÉ
351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—Aug. 10-11: The bassist **Joris Teepe** is a Danish expatriate who has become quite simpatico over the past few years with **Don Braden,** a tenor saxophonist whose authority is felt in every well-crafted phrase. Teepe ups the ante by fortifying his quintet with another crackerjack young saxophonist, **Seamus Blake.**

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Beyond the Easel: Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis and Roussel, 1890-1930,"** which traces the careers of the four post-Impressionist painters, is the visual equivalent of a beach book. But it's more Jackie Collins than Tom Clancy. The imagery these artists preferred—cozy interiors, cavorting poodles, outings at the beach—looks far from radical today, but in fin-de-siècle France the infusion of art into everyday life was groundbreaking. Much of the work was commissioned for private homes; a pair of torchères designed by Lucien Levy-Dhurer flanking the entrance signals the decorative, domestic theme. (In a similar but misguided strategy, the gallery walls are painted in murky period colors: oxblood and deep teal). Of the four artists, Vuillard fares best. Though his compact, mosaiclike brushwork can cloy, in a painting like "Windows Overlooking the Woods," a sweeping view of the French countryside, it takes on the knotty magic of a tapestry. Through Sept. 9. ♦ **"Summer Selections: American Landscape Drawings and Watercolors."** Nearly fifty summer landscapes and seascapes—all works on paper by American artists—are tucked away in the cozy mezzanine galleries of the American Wing. Maurice Prendergast conveys the simple pleasures of a seaside stroll in a jaunty watercolor of nineteenth-century day-trippers. On a darker note, Thomas Cole's fastidious drawing "The Wounded Indian Slaking His Death-Thirst" pits the eternity of na-

CHRISTIAN CLAYTON

ture against the fragility of life, as massive boulders and contorted trees dwarf the tiny stooping figure. Frequent visitors to the museum will get a kick out of Frederick Arthur Bridgman's studies of the Temple of Dendur, portrayed against a view of Egypt as opposed to the familiar one of Central Park. Through Sept. 2. ♦ **"Dancing on the Roof: Photography and the Bauhaus (1923-29)"** focusses on the work of László Moholy-Nagy and his students at the Weimar haven for artistic experiment. Through Aug. 26. ♦ In summertime, the museum's roof is transformed into Met Hampton (a bikini-free zone). This year, the sun worshippers and singles who mob the roof on weekend evenings share their turf with five large sculptures by Joel Shapiro. Three are cast in bronze, two in aluminum (one painted fire-engine red and the other cobalt blue). All five employ a similar formal strategy: square and rectangular bars are joined together at apparently haphazard angles. The arrangements have a Constructivist flavor and, in the case of the colored sculptures, invite an anthropomorphic reading, with the bars legible as arms, trunks, and legs. But the most ambitious piece, which is twenty-four feet high and looks gravitationally impossible, resembles a tumbling game of pickup sticks. Through late fall. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—An antidote to Gehry fever, the first half of the Mies van der Rohe extravaganza has opened with "Mies in Berlin." Matching its subject's famous simplicity, the show is a calmly paced bildungsroman, tracing a thirty-year progression from Schinkelesque prodigy to modernist master. Understandably, the show's curators, Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, worried that canonical projects like the Tugendhat House and the Barcelona Pavilion might seem too familiar. Their decision to freshen things up with Thomas Ruff's cloying colorized photographs is the show's only lapse. Otherwise, it's easy to fall under the spell of Mies's planar vision, his integration of landscape and garden design (more suited to a Californian than a Germanic climate), and his infectious love of *betonte Leere,* or heightened emptiness. A complementary show (at the Whitney) picks up where this one leaves off, with Mies's arrival in the United States in 1938. Through Sept. 11. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—At Frank Gehry's first retrospective, at the Whitney in 1986, undulant titanium roofs and wriggling walls were nowhere in sight. The Los Angeles-based architect seemed a quirky regional figure, fond of unorthodox materials (cardboard, chain-link fencing) and given to chopping projects into multiple room-size buildings. Nobody could have predicted that he would soon be the world's most sought-after and publicized architect. This new, profoundly exhilarating show tracks Gehry's path to Bilbao, and offers working models of current projects in Scotland, Germany, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. It's too much to absorb in a single visit, but even a quick walk-through will leave visitors delighted, buoyed, amazed—and a little nostalgic for the plumb-line architecture that Gehry's fluid, crumpling planes seem poised to supplant. Through Aug. 26. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO

575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—Hiroshi Sugimoto takes lush head-on photographs, in the August Sander tradition, of such historical figures as Henry VIII, Napoleon, Queen Victoria, Voltaire, and William Shakespeare in their wax incarnations. Through Nov. 10. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—For his first New York retrospective, Wayne Thiebaud's career has been served up in four courses, beginning with dessert. During his pastry period, Thiebaud turned cafeteria fare—not just wedges of cake and pie but a whole alphabet of prepared foods—into something enduringly wry and lovely, a celebration of everyday artifice. The stiff and studied portraits that follow are the show's weakest moment, but Thiebaud returns to form in the subsequent cityscapes and farmland scenes, creating steep, unapologetic Arcadias. There are echoes of Hopper, Diebenkorn, and Johns throughout, but none of Thiebaud's predecessors have his cool, confectionary jauntiness. Through Sept. 23. ♦ Picking up where MOMA's more engaging early Mies exhibition leaves off, **"Mies in America"** looks at how the Master of Less and the Culture of More altered each other. Focussing on a few major commissions—among them the Lake Shore Drive Towers, in Chicago; the Seagram Building; and the Chicago Convention Hall—the exhibition offers a kind of dry immersion in Mies's immaterialist aesthetic. With acres of bland drawings and only a few models, this show isn't going to change many minds: skeptics will leave with a renewed conviction that Mies's buildings are three-dimensional graph paper. But the lucid wall texts, prepared by a curatorial team led by Phyllis Lambert (who first worked with Mies as the client for the Seagram Building), remind us that his simple effects depended upon a host of tweaked, ingenious details. Through Sept. 23. ♦ The Tower of Babel has nothing on the Whitney this month, as Joseph Grigely transforms the lobby gallery into a chapel of white noise. The artist became deaf at the age of ten, and conducts conversations with nonsigners through notes scribbled by them on scraps of paper. Grigely can speak, so we read only one side of the dialogue, ranging from a series of chitchat non sequiturs ("loud wind now" followed by "Wim Wenders, too") to emphatic declarations ("I want 10%"). More than twenty-five hundred of these scraps are installed floor to ceiling in the oval space, the visual equivalent of a drone. Through Sept. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The Discovery Room, a hands-on educational program conceived in the museum's dark belly, has just moved into its new and permanent headquarters, a sunny, two-thousand-square-foot play space next door to the familiar big ceremonial canoe at the Seventy-seventh Street entrance. Inside the room, a replica of an African baobab tree spreads its branches over displays about the scientists and artists who studied and re-created it, and a working dinosaur dig busies young paleontologists. There's a surprisingly wide variety of specimens for little paws to hold and shake and investigate, including an outsized dinosaur-toe bone, a mastodon tusk, and, resting in a shredded paper nest, in drawer 52 of a brand-new child-sized specimen cabinet, one emu egg, now broken. The management describes the accident as a learning experience. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

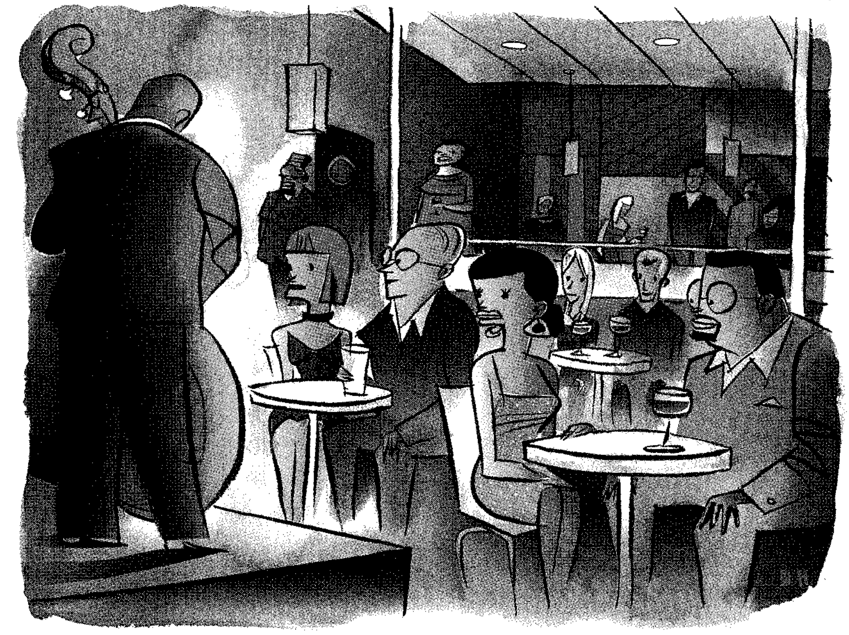
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Like the Whitney's recent foray into computer-aided artmaking, **"Digital Printmaking Now"** is best enjoyed by turning your expectations way down. Much of what's on view—manipulated photographs or drawings by established names like Donald Sultan, Chuck Close, and Carroll Dunham—uses technology only incidentally. The rest veers toward jokey surrealist photo-collage: flying turtles, lemons with nipples, a plate of inkjet cookies. Strangely, it's the most decorative works that use the new technology best. Some of these—especially the lovely, intricate wallpaperish patterns designed by Carl Fudge and Miriam Dym—might have impressed even that arch-technophobe, William Morris. Through Sept. 2. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

583 Broadway (219-1222)—The first American retrospective for William Kentridge, a South African artist best known for poetic animated films based on his own charcoal drawings. While these oblique chronicles, which include the occasional angry mob and tortured prisoner, do depict the strife of apartheid, Kentridge is a humanist, not an activist. The imagery in his films unfurls with the illogical clarity of a dream: faucets become birds, heads become bowls, and handkerchiefs weep, flooding the floor. Even the most politically explicit film, "Ubu and the Truth Commission," stars a nineteenth-century cartoon character (the eponymous Ubu, conceived by Alfred Jarry). The show includes eleven films, more than sixty drawings, videotapes of the artist's theatrical projects, and two recent installations that combine film projections with mirrored objects. Through Sept. 16. (Open Wednesdays and Sundays, noon to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 8.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"Buzz Club: News from Japan."** Part of the first floor here has been converted into a seventy-foot-long beehive, which explains the "buzz" in the show's title. Lilliputian installations by Japanese artists and designers are crammed into hexagonal cubbyholes like com-



Iridium officially opens its new space on Broadway (see Night Life).

MARCELLUS HALL

muters on a rush-hour train. Technology dominates, as customized cell phones (heavy on Hello Kitty-style cuteness) join the requisite Web projects, music videos, and *anime* cartoons. Viewers are invited to crawl into some of the mini-galleries, but only the extremely young at heart or slender of hip are likely to be tempted. Through Sept. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

MORRIS GRAVES
Most people's image of Graves, who died in May, comes from a 1973 photograph of the monklike artist in his leek garden, looking aloof and impossibly handsome. It's easy to see why Merce Cunningham and Marsden Hartley, among others, would have been prone to infatuation. Graves's Zen-inspired art work, as this mini-retrospective reminds us, can be aloof almost to the point of drabness. In his finest works, though, Graves set aside his meditative inclinations in favor of simple observation. The titles ("Vessel Feeling the Grandeur of Space" versus "Irish Goat") tell it all. Through Aug. 17. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122.)

DON VAN VLIET
Back when he was singing lyrics like "I love you, you big dummy. Ha ha ha ha. Quit asking why," Van Vliet, then known as Captain Beefheart, seemed unassailably weird. As a painter, though, the odd thing about Van Vliet is how honorable and categorizable his work feels. In this sampling of paintings from the eighties, the brashly colored nudes, deer, and monkeys have clearly floated in from the German Expressionist sector of the collective unconscious. They look great—full of coarse impasto and charm—but never quite unfamiliar. Through Sept. 8. (Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 988-1623.)

"DELICIOUS"
In the spirit of recent shows with titles like "Luscious," "Opulent," and "Bright" (the latter at this same gallery), "Delicious" rounds up artists who favor high-key, sorbet-colored abstraction. Their works often include culinary implications, though not all are appetizing: Amy Green's bubbling urethane reliefs look like milk-based desserts (blancmange, maybe) left to spoil in the heat. The most accomplished of the eight artists is Carl Ostendarp, whose small, Day-Glo images of snacks (a pretzel, a scattering of peanuts) are simple, but sneakily resonant: they're metaphors to nosh on. Through Aug. 15. (Roger Smith, 501 Lexington Ave., at 48th St. 832-8831.)

"MINIMALISM: PAST AND PRESENCE"
This playful show toys with the conventions of minimalism. A turquoise-orange-and-chartreuse wall piece from 1987 by Donald Judd looks downright baroque compared to the austerity of his early "specific objects," which helped define the movement. Nearby a sanctimonious sculpture of glass, steel, and cloth by Jaume Plensa from last year hangs like a bunch of deflated thought balloons. An eight-foot Alfredo Jaar light box with a color transparency almost glows with emptiness, except for a portrait of South American gold miners, which cowers at the left edge of the frame. It's as if the white plane were trying to squeeze the content out of the picture. Through Aug. 15. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. 315-0470.)

"MODELS OF OBSERVATION: FLOWERS, FISHES, BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES"
This time traveller of a show combines three Dutch still-life paintings from the seventeenth century with the work of three wildly disparate American artists: Milton Avery, Nancy Graves, and Donald Sultan. The Old Masters meet "This Old House" in Sultan's flock of birds made with floor tiles and tar in lieu of canvas and paint. (Don't miss his small bronze bird perched high above the entrance to the gallery.) Avery's winsome paintings are an antidote to the brooding Sultan; they're art's equivalent of an endless summer day. In Graves's bronze sculpture "Pilot," a botanical behemoth hunkers menacingly on the gallery floor like a still-life on steroids. Through Sept. 29. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550.)

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

"SONG POEMS"
In what is undoubtedly the summer's most serenely nutty and ambitious group project, the California painter Steven Hull got a hundred and sixty artists to collaborate. Hull asked forty writers to contribute poems, and forty musicians to set those poems to music. Forty visual artists made accompanying music videos. Another forty artists made album covers or posters. The result is a veritable Lollapalooza, with contributions by a scattering of familiar names such as Rick Moody, Glenn Ligon, and Alix Lambert. Through Aug. 10. (Cohan Leslie and Brown, 138 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 206-8710.)

"HEROINE"
Fantasy and fashion combine in this uneven group show devoted to the work of five women. Charlotta Westergren spells out a quotation from "Madame Bovary" in flowers cut from the pages of *Martha Stewart Living*, while across the room she stars as a petal-strewn Ophelia in a lush photographic self-portrait. Hope Atherton puts a new twist on an old still-life subject in her hyper-real sculpture of two dead hares sporting tiny saddles. A static puce painting of cheerleaders by Inka Essenhigh, from 1996, demonstrates how much her technique has developed in recent years. Through Aug. 17. (Dee/Glasoe, 529 W. 20th St. 924-7545.)

TABLES FOR TWO

TAMARIND
41-43 E. 22nd St. (674-7400)—A waiter sets two dishes on the table. One holds pappadams, the spicy, waferlike Indian flat bread; the other holds a sweet tamarind-pulp syrup, made from the pod of the Indian evergreen. The delicious, not quite familiar combination is like the first pluck of a sitar's strings, an announcement of the delicately complex mixture of flavors, aromas, and textures that are available at this sleek, sophisticated newcomer to the Flatiron district.

Tamarind's affably imposing owner, Avtar Walia, enlisted Raji Jallepali-Reiss, the proprietor of a celebrated Indian-French fusion restaurant in Memphis, Tennessee, to create the menu, and her inventive, light-handed approach is apparent in even the most traditional Indian fare. Among the more intriguing appetizers are raj kachori, a Calcutta specialty of tamarind-flavored chickpeas served en croûte, and Rajasthani sooley, skewered grilled strips of lamb, marinated in lemon and garlic and served perfectly rare. A she-crab soup, enlivened with an infusion of sweet spices, ginger juice, and saffron, suggests a Mardi Gras in Madras. Especially good among the main dishes are a whole, crisp-roasted small leg of lamb marinated in mint-ginger chutney, and a roasted Cornish game hen with tamarind-and-garlic soup. The standout among the seafood dishes is a fisherman's stew of mussels, clams, and shrimp in a tomato consommé, whose subtlety makes its Mediterranean counterparts seem lumpen. All the classic Indian vegetarian and rice dishes are available, including an exemplary Punjabi dal of black lentils, and, in that usual wasteland in Indian menus—the desserts—Tamarind has come up with a number of gentle palate soothers. The restaurant's version of rasmalai, cottage-cheese dumplings flavored with cardamom and rose water, has to be the most delectable blending of two courses—the cheese and the sweet—in town. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $10-$24.)

—*Charles Michener*

Short List

PETER PINCHBECK
Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through Aug. 10.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

"THE LP SHOW"
This gleefully subjective survey of album-cover art describes itself as an "homage to a dying art form." It begins at the LP's birth, with a display of Alex Steinweiss's graphic-design output from 1940 to 1961. From his groundbreaking gilded princes, it's only a few steps (guided by a band of LPs around the show's walls, several hundred feet long and six records high) to Olivia Newton John and John Cale. Free association leads from there through booty- and midriff-baring covers, including several years of racy-looking Top-of-the-Pops releases, and various exotica, like a nubile El Tigre in a tiger-print bikini, to animal-themed recordings like "Let's All Sing with the Chipmunks" and the cat-fancying "My Pussy Belongs to Daddy," which seems to fall somewhere in the midst of those categories. In the back room, Christian Marclay's display of more than eighty copies of Herb Alpert's "Whipped Cream and Other Delights," showing a model covered with and otherwise enjoying the title substance, is punctuated with one copy of Pat Cooper's response, "Spaghetti Sauce and Other Delights," which shows the artist draped in and slurping up the title concoction. Through Aug. 17. (Exit Art, 58 Broadway. 966-7745.)

"SHE LIVES ON LOVE STREET"
The typically cryptic 1968 Doors song after which this exhibit is named places its title character's lovely home near a mysterious "store where the creatures meet / I wonder what they do in there." The artists behind the largely feminine psychedelia on show seem to have stopped by that head shop on the way to the studio. Angela Wyman draws her subjects' ballooning breasts and thighs nearly as wide as the women are tall; Pam Butler paints pastel bunny rabbits on five-by-seven-inch canvases, and assembles what look like bits of aimless notebook marginalia—stylized women's faces, stylized ducks—into large, disjointed marker drawings. Julie Evans paints—what else—rainbows, somehow managing, with sharp and iridescent color and geometry, to make them look cool enough to hang by your bunk bed. Through Aug. 17. (Pelavin, 13 Jay St. 925-9424.)

GALLERIES–BROOKLYN

"THE LIFE YOU SAVE MAY BE YOUR OWN"
In the Flannery O'Connor story from which this show takes its title, a drifter handyman marries a mentally disabled woman at her mother's urging, and no lives are saved or even figuratively redeemed. The only artist here to tackle such moral disarray—with crucial differences in class and memoiristic style—is Michelle Cortez, whose snapshots of her drunken friends frolicking and mugging their way through limo crashes and tattoo show-and-tell and sun-raked hungover mornings cover one long wall of the main gallery. In a nice bit of tabloid theatrics, an acquaintance of Cortez's is accused of having stolen her topless self-portrait from its prominent hanging place during the show's opening reception and despite the efforts of gallery functionaries, who clung to the getaway S.U.V. Through Aug. 12. (31 Grand, 31 Grand St., Brooklyn. 718-388-2858.)

"PETE AND REPEAT"
This show stretches its concept, repetition, to include the replaying of films, television laugh tracks, and answering-machine messages, as well as the recurrent behavior of alcoholism (Tristin Lowe's bubbling, bourbon-soaked bed pillow and huge pink elephant). Leesa and Nicole Abahuni's drawing robots, Linus and Minus, perpetrate

"Queen Victoria," by the photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto, at the Guggenheim SoHo.

more single-minded repetition. These little battery-powered Plexiglas bubbles on wheels are equipped with Magic Markers and programmed to draw zigzagging labyrinth forms and concentric circles on sheets of clear acetate. Examples of their work are on display. The Abahunis, who also like to be called the TurboTwins, encourage viewers to join their mechanical counterparts in these efforts. Through Aug. 19. (D.U.M.B.O. Arts Center, 30 Washington St. 718-694-0831.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

GRACIELA FUENTES
The exhibition space at Splendid—best visited around 6:30 P.M., just after it opens but before it comes to life as a bar for local Brooklyn artists—is just the right spot for Fuentes's homesick photos. Each print shows a corner of her New York apartment with a slide of her childhood home, Monterrey, Mexico, projected onto it. In one, a dramatic landscape appears as if reflected on the convex body of a teakettle; similar scenes appear on a paper bag, a gallon jug of water, a dish rack, a bathtub, and inside a toilet. A smaller series of five-by-seven-inch postcards titled "Wish You Were Here" offer greetings from Fuentes's ideal world, where the Statue of Liberty presides over a harbor that combines Mexican and American elements. Through Aug. 30. (Splendid, 132 Greenpoint Ave., Brooklyn. 718-383-7037. Open 6:30 P.M. to 2 A.M., Tuesdays through Sundays, and by appointment.)

RUTH THORNE-THOMSEN
These ocean scenes start as paper negatives from a pinhole camera, about as low-tech as one can get. After that, they get a digital finish—they are scanned and then formatted nostalgically, with the top corners rounded and the bottom ones square. Thorne-Thomsen chooses and renders her misty swirling waters and distant ships well, but the mixed technologies and prominent cropping seem like shortcuts to an effect that she doesn't quite pull off. Through Aug. 24. (Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930.)

"MORE THAN ONE"
This sensitive collection of multiple portraits also explores a theme of the moment—size. The head of a larger-than-life little boy in Richard Avedon's mural-size print of "Allen Ginsberg's Family, Paterson, New Jersey, May 3, 1970" is as big as an entire James Van Der Zee portrait of a church communion class, while Arthur S. Mole and John D. Thomas's eleven-by-fourteen-inch aerial shot of hundreds of people forming a portrait of Woodrow Wilson's face reduces each subject to a dot. The good stuff, particularly work by Neal Slavin and August Sander, looks even better than usual in this crowd. Through Aug. 24. (Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.)

"NO BIG PICTURES"
In response to the recent bigger-is-better trend toward mural-size prints, the gallery fills its two small spaces with a roundup of small images, many from its archives. Unique maquettes from Vito Acconci, Chuck Close, and Joel-Peter Witkin are mixed in with vintage prints by Jacques Henri Lartigue, André

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Kertész, and Paul Outerbridge. Four color Polaroids by Philip-Lorca diCorcia are framed together to force an oblique narrative, and Robert Frank offers a single contact sheet packed with his greatest hits of 1955-56, some of which eventually made it into his seminal book "The Americans." Through Aug. 31. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

"SUMMER SALON"
Half of this seasonally themed exhibit is devoted to images of flowers and butterflies, all charming, if unchallenging, from Judith McMillan, Zeva Oelbaum, and Steve Rifkin. The beaches look better, in Massimo Vitali's arrestingly large and bright Italian scene—which benefits greatly from being the only color piece here, and the most animated by far in subject and composition—and Beatrice Valdes-Paz's pinhole images of families running in the waves. Vitali's picture is almost an advertisement for the crowded stretch of Italian sand it captures, while Valdes-Paz's fuzzy, dark-rimmed shores make you feel you've been there before, and may have even inadvertently posed for her. Through Aug. 24. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (860-1777)—Sebastião Salgado's **"Migrations: Humanity in Transition."** Over the past seven years, Salgado has visited more than thirty-five countries, travelling with and photographing some of the nearly a hundred million migrants now wandering the planet. Viewers who follow international news may be familiar not only with the trouble spots he's been to—Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia among them—but also with these images, some of which have appeared in major American news magazines. Nevertheless, the effect of seeing them, particularly the sweeping landscapes, as immaculate black-and-white prints filling these large, open galleries, remains powerful. Through Sept. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

JAMES BIDGOOD
Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752.
Through Aug. 17.

HERBERT LIST
Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 366-4774.
Through Aug. 24.

SEBASTIÃO SALGADO
Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.
Through Aug. 24.

AARON SISKIND
Bruce Silverstein, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930.
Through Aug. 31.

JAVIER VALLHONRAT
Diane von Furstenberg's studio, The Theater,
385 W. 12th St. 753-1111. Aug. 9-12.

"THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS"
Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 24th St. 989-7600.
Through Aug. 31.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

CONCERTS AROUND TOWN

BARGEMUSIC
Aug. 9 at 7:30 and Aug. 12 at 4: Music by Brahms, Bartók ("Contrasts"), and the Franco-Russian composer Georgy Catoire (1861-1926), performed by the clarinettist Thomas Hill, the pianist Randall Hodgkinson, and others. ♦ Aug. 10-11 at 7:30: The Rosalyra Quartet presents music by Mozart, Ravel, and Brahms (the Quartet in A Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

MOSTLY MOZART FESTIVAL
Aug. 9 at 8: The great German countertenor Andreas Scholl, renowned for his pure tone and poignantly restrained style, is the opposite of the sumptuously voiced David Daniels, the only other countertenor who ranks alongside him; he appears in an all-Vivaldi concert given by the period-instrument group Europa Galante, directed by Fabio Biondi. (Avery Fisher Hall.) ♦ Aug. 10-11 at 8: Andreas Delfs conducts the Mostly Mozart Orchestra in a program of Beethoven and Mozart (including the Violin Concerto No. 5), featuring the pianist Andreas Haefliger and the violinist Christian Tetzlaff. (Avery Fisher Hall.) ♦ Aug. 12 at 5: The oratorio "The Seasons," one of Haydn's very last works, has never enjoyed the popularity of its predecessor, "The Creation"; it gets a rare airing with the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra, the conductor Helmuth Rilling, and the singers Susan Gritton, John Mark Ainsley, and Neal Davies. (Avery Fisher Hall.) ♦ Aug. 13 at 8: Bruno Weil conducts the Haydn Orchestra in an all-Haydn program, including two of the better-known symphonies (Nos. 45, "Farewell," and 88) along with the Piano Concerto in D (with Piotr Anderszewski). (Alice Tully Hall.) ♦ Aug. 14-15 at 8: The festival orchestra, conducted by Thomas Dausgaard, returns for a program of Beethoven (including the First Piano Concerto, with Garrick Ohlsson) and Tchaikovsky (the "Rococo Variations," with Peter Wispelwey). (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500.)

OUT OF TOWN

BRIDGEHAMPTON CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
Aug. 8 at 8: A big program of Schubert, ranging from the lofty (the Piano Trio No. 1 and the String Quintet) to the slight (the Introduction and Variations for Flute and Piano); the musicians include the pianist Jeremy Denk and the violinist Alexander Simionescu. ♦ Aug. 11 at 8: Music by Johannes Brahms (the Piano Quintet and the Horn Trio) mixes with the rambunctious creations of the young composer Kenji Bunch, played by the flutist Marya Martin, the percussionist Daniel Druckman, and others. ♦ Aug. 12 at 6:30: The trumpeter Chris Gekker, the bassoonist Judith LeClair, and others perform Beethoven's Septet and Stravinsky's "Histoire du Soldat" (with André De Shields as narrator). (Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church, Bridgehampton, N.Y. For more information, call 631-537-6368.)

TANGLEWOOD
Aug. 8 at 8:30: Dawn Upshaw, a radiant but restless artist, continues her adventurous explorations of the song repertory at Ozawa Hall. For this concert, her focus shifts to music inspired by folk song, composed by Bartók, Berio, Mahler, and Ives. Her chamber ensemble includes such musicians as the pianist Gilbert Kalish and the harpist Ann Hobson Pilot; Federico Cortese conducts. ♦ Aug. 10 at 8:30: The legendary, munificent, and rarely seen Van Cliburn still gets out of the house for an occasional concert, but only to play a very narrow repertory of Romantic warhorses in what could be called a very grand and narrow manner. This time it's the Grieg Piano Concerto, with André Previn leading the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the Shed; Copland's verdant "Appalachian Spring" and Dvořák's Symphony No. 7 complete the program. A chamber-music program precedes the concert, at 6. ♦ Aug. 11 at 8:30: Roberto Abbado conducts Mahler's First Symphony, Mozart's Flute Concerto in G Major, K. 313 (with Jacques Zoon), and "Machault Mon Chou," an unusually lighthearted work by the American composer Charles Wuorinen. ♦ Aug. 12 at 2:30: The B.S.O. presents music by Smetana, Martinů (the Symphony No. 6, "Fantaisies Symphoniques"), and Brahms (the Symphony No. 2), conducted by Bernard Haitink. (Lenox, Mass. 617-266-1200.)

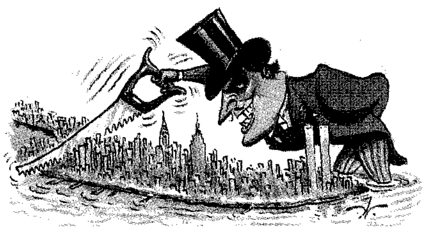
FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AT TANGLEWOOD
The music of Charles Wuorinen, this year's composer-in-residence, has always been unrepentantly atonal, but the festival will give listeners a chance to take in the full range of his work, from the rough, edgy, harmonically dense music of the nineteen-seventies to the more plastic, colorful, and accessible pieces of recent years. Among the other composers represented are Julian Anderson, Gunther Schuller, Hans Werner Henze, Jo Kondo, and Augusta Read Thomas; the artistic director is Oliver Knussen. (Lenox, Mass. For more information, call 617-266-1200. Aug. 9-14.)

CARAMOOR
The Caramoor Virtuosi, a floating group of outstanding musicians who have participated in the

BOOK CURRENTS

Confidence Men

On a summer day in the eighteen-twenties, two men brought startling news to New York City's Centre Market. Manhattan, they announced, was sinking. The men explained that the mayor had sanctioned an emergency plan to saw off the bottom half of the island, drag it out into the harbor, turn it head to toe, and reattach it. **NEW YORK SAWED IN HALF** (Bloomsbury), Joel Rose's semi-fictional re-creation of the hoax, reflects on the peculiar complicity that exists between the duper and the duped; Rose invokes P. T. Barnum's crack that "the common man, no matter how sharp and tough, actually enjoys having the wool pulled over his eyes, and makes it easier for the puller."



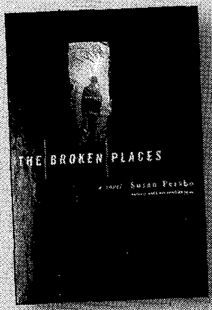
Exploiting the public's gullibility has always been the preserve of pranksters and impostors. The sleight-of-hand artist, actor, and author Ricky Jay draws a rogue's gallery of these hustlers in **JAY'S JOURNAL OF ANOMALIES** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), which includes everything from flea trainers to ceiling walkers to freak-show entrepreneurs.

While some hoaxers rely on their ability to charm a crowd, others simply make a grand claim and hope that no one calls their bluff. In **GREAT EXPLORATION HOAXES** (Modern Library), David Roberts describes how many adventurers have bent the truth in order to make their reputations—among others, Robert E. Peary, who didn't quite reach the North Pole, and Frederick Cook, who never got anywhere near the summit of Mt. McKinley. But the most poignant is the case of James Bruce, who was derided in the late eighteenth century for embellishing his account of his journey to Abyssinia. Only when nineteenth-century explorers retraced Bruce's steps was it discovered that his outlandish descriptions had been true all along.

—William Cohen

MICHAEL WITTE

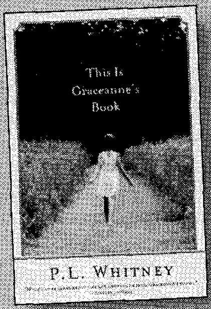
HERO



Twelve-year-old Paul Tucker is suffocating beneath his all-American family's tradition of valor and heroism. After his firefighter father is hailed as a hero for saving a local teen, Paul finds that his father and his own life have changed completely.

THE BROKEN PLACES
by Susan Perabo
Pub. Price: $23.00
Our Price: $18.40
Readers' Advantage Price: $16.56

HEROINE



Growing up on the Mississippi, nine-year-old Charlie chronicles a pivotal year in the life of his sister. Rambunctious and courageous, Graceanne may be the stuff of local legend, but her passage into her teens isn't made any easier by a violent mother.

THIS IS GRACEANNE'S BOOK
by P.L. Whitney
Pub. Price: $13.95
Our Price: $11.16
Readers' Advantage Price: $10.04

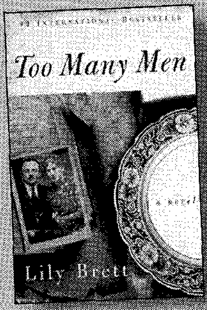
HOME

ON THE NIGHT PLAIN
J. ROBERT LENNON

Hearing of his mother's death, Grant Person returns home to run his family's struggling Montana sheep ranch. He confronts his guilt over the death of his brother in World War II and the allure of his other brother's woman, Sophia.

ON THE NIGHT PLAIN
by J. Robert Lennon
Pub. Price: $23.00
Our Price: $18.40
Readers' Advantage Price: $16.56

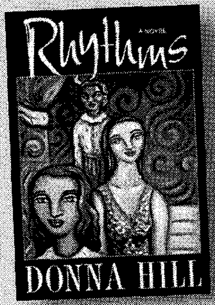
HOLOCAUST



Ruth runs a letter-writing business providing the perfect words for any occasion. But to express feelings about her parents' time at Auschwitz, she can't find any words. She embarks on a trip to Poland to face both their past and her future.

TOO MANY MEN
by Lily Brett
Pub. Price: $26.00
Our Price: $20.80
Readers' Advantage Price: $18.72

HIDDEN



An African American woman, whose mother has chosen to pass as white, traces her family's confusion back to her grandmother's journey from the deep South to Chicago, where she lost her innocence to her white employer.

RHYTHMS
by Donna Hill
Pub. Price: $23.95
Our Price: $19.16
Readers' Advantage Price: $17.24

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Prices effective at store locations through 8/19/01 festival's prestigious young-artist program, take center stage in the festival's final week. Aug. 9 at 4:30: Chamber music by Martinů, Dohnányi, and Schubert (the early String Quartet in G Minor), in *the Spanish Courtyard*. ♦ Aug. 10 at 8: The Virtuosi are joined by a special guest, the veteran pianist Claude Frank, for an evening of Brahms, Mozart (the Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major), and Sofia Gubaidulina (her String Trio, from 1988). ♦ Aug. 11 at 8:30: In the festival's final concert, Peter Oundjian, Caramoor's artistic director, leads the Caramoor Virtuosi Orchestra in his own string-orchestra transcription of Britten's Quartet No. 2, along with two works by Mozart, the sunny Symphony No. 29 in A Major and the Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola (with Ani and Ida Kavafian). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

Charles Dutoit, who can always be trusted to provide lustrous and energetic performances of French repertory, leads the ensemble in a "French Week" of four concerts. Aug. 8 at 8:15: Two pieces for organ and orchestra, Poulenc's Organ Concerto and Saint-Saëns's "Organ" Symphony, frame Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand (with Gary Graffman), one of his darkest and most turbulent works. ♦ Aug. 9 at 8: A program of music by Sarasate, Massenet, Dukas, Berlioz (the "Symphonie Fantastique"), and Ravel (the "Tzigane"), featuring the violinist Sarah Chang. ♦ Aug. 10 at 8:15: Debussy's epic "La Mer" starts off an otherwise lighter program, followed by Jean-Philippe Collard and Pascal Rogé as the soloists in both Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos and Saint-Saëns's "Carnival of the Animals," and Ravel's "Bolero." ♦ Aug. 11 at 8:15: The maestro clears his desk, offering up a selection of short pieces by Bizet, Debussy, Dukas, Ravel, and Roussel, along with Saint-Saëns's fanciful Piano Concerto No. 2 (with André Watts). (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. For more information, call *518-587-3330. Through Aug. 18.)*

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA

Aug. 9 at 8, Aug. 11 at 1:30, and Aug. 14 at 2: Britten's "The Rape of Lucretia," with Michelle DeYoung, Nathan Gunn, Christine Goerke, and William Burden; the conductor is Stewart Robertson. ♦ Aug. 10 at 8 and Aug. 13 at 2: Handel's "Agrippina," with Alexandra Coku, Beth Clayton, Karen Wierzba, Derrick Parker, and David Walker; Harry Bicket. ♦ Aug. 11 at 8: Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro," with Dean Ely, Joyce Guyer, Nicole Heaston, Valerie Komar, and Christopher Schaldenbrand; George Manahan. ♦ Aug. 12 at 2: Chabrier's comic opera "L'Étoile," with Torrance Blaisdell, Karina Gauvin, and Christine Abraham; Robertson. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

BARD MUSIC FESTIVAL:
"DEBUSSY AND HIS WORLD"

Claude Debussy's works, for all their surface sensuality, tend to be valued for the way their expressive ambiguity and structural obscurity paved the way for the music of international modernism. But the Bard Festival, organized by the conductor-impresario Leon Botstein, will give listeners a richer perspective, surrounding Debussy's music with that of his more Romantic French colleagues in two weekends of concerts; film screenings and symposia will also be held. Aug. 10 at 8:30: An overview of the composer's piano and chamber music, from the String Quartet in G Minor (from 1893, played by the Colorado Quartet) to the 1915 piano duo "En Blanc et Noir" (performed by Jeremy Denk and Jonathan Biss). ♦ Aug. 11 at 1:30: Chamber music by composers who thrived during the years of the Third Republic, such as Fauré (the Violin Sonata No. 1, played by Eugene Drucker and the pianist Melvin Chen), Chabrier, Lalo, and others; *the assisting musicians include the pianist* Karl Paulnack and the tenor Steven Tharp. ♦ Aug. 11 at 8: "Debussy Before Pelléas," an orchestral program including the lapidary cantata "La Damoiselle Élue" and its companion work, "L'Enfant Prodigue" (featuring Dominique Labelle, John Aler, and François Le Roux). ♦ Aug. 12 at 10 A.M.: Choral music by Chausson, Gounod, Satie, and others, featuring the New York Virtuoso Singers. ♦ Aug. 12 at 1:30: "The Legacy of César Franck," celebrating the composer-pedagogue who attracted a devoted band of admirers including Duparc, Chausson, Roussel, and Magnard. Their music will be performed alongside the Master's Piano Trio No. 4, *an exotic bit of juvenilia; the musicians* include Aler and the violinist Juliette Kang. ♦ Aug. 12 at 5: "Debussy's Allies and Admirers," music by Dukas, Schmitt, Kochelin, Ravel (the early, rarely heard "Sites Auriculaires" for two pianos), performed by Tharp, the pianist Dennis Helmrich, and others. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. For more information about tickets and other events, call 845-758-3226.)

MARLBORO MUSIC FESTIVAL

The chamber-music festival enters its final weekend. (Marlboro, Vt. 802-254-2394. Aug. 10-12.)

BERKSHIRE OPERA

After sixteen years of wandering among five different venues, this hardy company has finally found a permanent home: the Mahaiwe Theatre, a ninety-six-year-old former movie house in Great Barrington. While the site won't be ready for fully staged operas until next summer, the company is kicking things off early with a concert of arias and ensembles sung by an impressive cast—including Amy Burton, Emily Pulley, Margaret Lattimore, Charles Castronovo, William Stone, and John Cheek (who last month gave the company a suave and diabolical Don Alfonso in "Così Fan Tutte"); Joel Revsen conducts. (Castle St., Great Barrington, Mass. 413-644-9988. Aug. 11 and Aug. 13 at 8; through Aug. 18.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN

Aug. 12 at 3: The St. Petersburg Quartet presents music by Shostakovich (the Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, a spooky set of miniatures), Dvořák, and Schnittke (the Quintet for Piano and Strings, with Michael Adcock). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

UP THE CREEK

As far as outer-borough waterways go, the Newtown Creek hasn't received nearly as much attention lately as the Gowanus Canal, which, thanks to a revitalized flushing tunnel, has seen a return of marine life. The creek, however, has a fascinating history—the heavily industrialized three-mile tributary of the East River once rivalled the Mississippi as the nation's busiest waterway—and it does, after all, help separate Queens from Brooklyn. On Aug. 12 at 9:30 A.M. the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment gives the Newtown its due with a cruise aboard the Chelsea Screamer powerboat. For anyone who has sat in his car during rush hour on the Kosciusko Bridge, which carries the B.Q.E. over the creek, the view from below will be a revelation. For more information, call 718-788-8500.

READINGS

Aug. 9 at 7: By Marian Thurm, from her new short-story collection, "What's Come Over You?," and by Jeff Bens, from his novel, "Albert, Himself." (Housing Works Used Books Café, 126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Aug. 14 at 7: By Marian Keyes, from her novel "Last Chance Saloon." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALK

Aug. 9 at 7:30: Ethan Brown, an editor at *New York* magazine, moderates a discussion about dancing and the enforcement of New York City's cabaret laws with the former New York Civil Liberties Union executive director Norman Siegel, the New York Night Life Association president David Rabin, the party promoter John Davis, and Robert Pritchard, *the leader of a protest group* called the Dance Liberation Front. (Makor, 35 W. 67th St. 601-1000.)

WALK

Aug. 12 at 1: Jerry Weinstein, the assistant manager of the Chelsea Hotel, leads a tour of the legendary haunt of such onetime residents as Arthur Miller, Willem de Kooning, and Thomas Wolfe. For information about reservations, which are required, call 415-5500.

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MOVIES OPENING

ALL OVER THE GUY
Julie Davis directed this romantic comedy about two men, complete opposites, who are thrown together by their best friends. With Dan Bucantinsky and Richard Ruccolo. Opening Aug. 10.

AMERICAN PIE 2
Jason Biggs, Tara Reid, Natasha Lyonne, Shannon Elizabeth, and Seann William Scott return in this sequel to the 1999 teen comedy. Directed by James B. Rogers. Opening Aug. 10.

AN AMERICAN RHAPSODY
The story of a Hungarian teen-ager (Scarlett Johansson) who emigrates to America in the fifties to rejoin her parents after a long separation. Written and directed by Éva Gardos. With Tony Goldwyn and Nastassja Kinski. Opening Aug. 10.

AUDITION
A widower's plan to find a new wife by holding auditions for a nonexistent film goes horribly awry in this thriller directed by Takashi Miike. In Japanese. Opening Aug. 8. (Film Forum.)

THE DEEP END
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Aug. 8.

OSMOSIS JONES
The Farrelly Brothers directed this comedy that mixes live action and animation. A white blood cell (voice by Chris Rock) defends the body of a construction worker (Bill Murray) from a marauding virus. Opening Aug. 10.

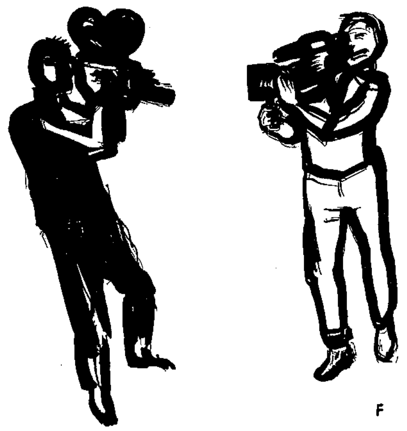
THE OTHERS
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Aug. 10.

SESSION 9
Brad Anderson ("Next Stop Wonderland") directed this horror film about asbestos-removal workers who take a new job at an abandoned insane asylum. With Peter Mullan and David Caruso. Opening Aug. 10.

THE TURANDOT PROJECT
A documentary about the 1997-98 staging of Puccini's opera in Florence and Beijing by Zubin Mehta and Zhang Yimou. Allan Miller directed. Opening Aug. 10.

FILM NOTES

A.I.
An extraordinarily accomplished failure. After dithering with this project for years, Stanley Kubrick bequeathed it to Steven Spielberg, who wrote his own screenplay after Kubrick's death. In the bleak world that remains after the polar ice cap has melted, David (Haley Joel Osment), a perfect-child robot programmed to love, so disturbs his neurotic mother (Frances O'Connor) that she turns him loose in the woods. There he hooks up with a friendly stud-gigolo robot (Jude Law, who is certainly more beautiful than anything human). At that point, the movie should have taken off as the story of a science-fiction Pinocchio—a toy who wants to be human—but despite many uncanny moments and some extraordinary visual invention, "A.I.," which appears to celebrate the end of human existence, leaves one in a depressed stupor.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 7/2/01.) (Battery Park 16, Coronet Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)



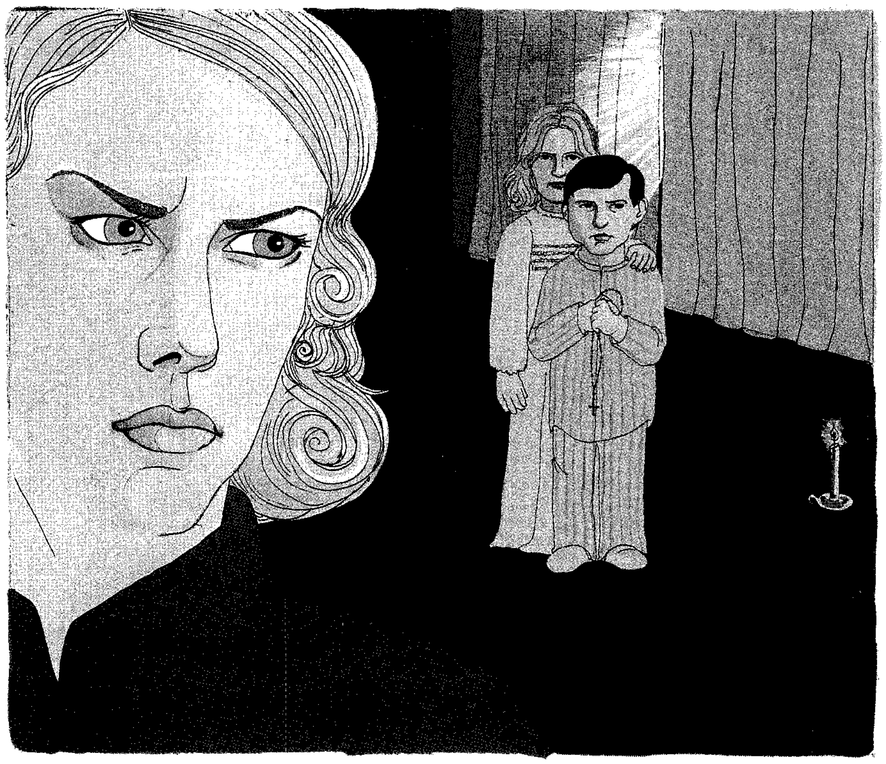
AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS
Though set in the present, this movie-industry farce, written by Billy Crystal and Peter Tolan and directed by Joe Roth, comes off as a lamely nostalgic attempt at screwball comedy. It's puckish and remote: the filmmakers, lacking the heart to confront the Hollywood of today, never achieve any kind of vital satirical tone. John Cusack and Catherine Zeta-Jones play a married couple who have starred in picture after picture together but have fallen out of love. Julia Roberts is a Cinderella figure who loses weight and blooms after years of servitude. As ersatz as the role is, Roberts fires up that smile and becomes the best thing in the movie.—*D.D.* (7/30/01) (Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

APOCALYPSE NOW REDUX
The horror is back, and this time it's even longer. Francis Ford Coppola recut his 1979 film and added forty-nine minutes. We get a dinner party for Willard (Martin Sheen) at a French plantation, the reappearance of the Playboy Bunnies, Kurtz (Marlon Brando) scornfully reciting a passage from *Time* magazine, and, most affectingly, more time on the boat with Chef (Frederic Forrest), Lance (Sam Bottoms), Clean (Laurence Fishburne), and Chief (Albert Hall). There is still plenty amiss with this picture—indigestible lumps of intellectual residue and the uneasy suspicion that Kurtz's kingdom is nothing worse than a T. S. Eliot study group gone terribly wrong. But there is so much to set against that, beginning with the deep *thugga-thugga* heartbeat of the choppers in the opening seconds. Walter Murch got an Oscar for Best Sound, and his work remains unsurpassed; take a friend who is visually impaired to this movie and he or she will get things out of it which you can barely imagine.—*Anthony Lane* (8/6/01) (Astor Plaza and Lincoln Square.)

BREAD AND TULIPS
Left behind by a tour bus, a bored Italian housewife (Licia Maglietta) refuses to go home to her selfish family and instead takes off for Venice, where she meets a variety of charming eccentrics, including a doleful, courtly waiter from Iceland (Bruno Ganz), who makes ponderous remarks and recites epic poetry. Whimsical and, except for Maglietta's lovely performance, unremarkable. Directed by Silvio Soldini. In Italian.—*D.D.* (Paris.)

BULLY
Larry Clark's new movie is based on events that took place near Fort Lauderdale in 1993, when a group of bored, disaffected teens plotted the murder of an abusive older boy. Clark doesn't bother with the kind of square sociological "understanding" which made fifties juvenile-delinquent movies so lugubrious; he gets in bed with the teen-agers and stays there, re-creating the brainless fantasies, the erotic and druggy stupor, the sheer ignorance of kids who don't know that anything outside their desires exists. The movie is pitiless and derisive—closer, at its best, to hip black comedy than to tragedy. But Clark is something of a scoundrel: the mangy haplessness of dumb teen-agers is exactly what eroticizes them for him, and he doesn't, for all his intimate contact, tell us why violence is the only way out for them. A fascinating but enraging movie. With Nick Stahl, Brad Renfro, and Rachel Miner.—*D.D.* (7/30/01) (Angelika Film Center.)

CATS & DOGS
Small children should enjoy Lawrence Guterman's homely fantasy, with its mixture of low, sniffing humor and high-tech effects. Jeff Goldblum and Elizabeth Perkins, who surely can't need the money that badly, play a couple who lose their pooch and replace it with a beagle. Like most beagles, this one is a first-time secret agent sent to foil a worldwide conspiracy of cats. The plot is Chihuahua-light, and there are many scenes that should have been scooped and thrown away. The animals perform in contorted live action, with the voices of Tobey Maguire, Susan Sarandon, and others issuing uncomfortably from canine lips. How can one movie be both cute and unutterably charmless?—*A.L.* (7/9/01) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, East 85th Street, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)



Nicole Kidman in "The Others," opening August 10.

LARA TOMLIN

GHOST WORLD
Two strip-mall Savonarolas, Enid (Thora Birch) and Rebecca (Scarlett Johansson), gaze with disgust at the fallen world around them. Terry Zwigoff's movie is based on Daniel Clowes's celebrated cartoon novel, which he and Clowes adapted. For a while, "Ghost World" seems to be a new type of dyspeptic comedy, acid yet tender. Zwigoff's sense of visual elegance gives clarity and snap to material that might have fallen into a crabby nowheresville. But the movie loses its cool. It zeroes in on Enid's unhappiness, and she begins to seem like a typical teen-ager who makes jokes to cover her pain and who needs to grow up. See it for Birch's hostile stare and Johansson's devastating monotone. With Steve Buscemi as a nominal adult who collects vintage blues seventy-eights.—*D.D.* (8/6/01) (Angelika Film Center, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH
Trash perfection. Flamboyant costumes, lollipop colors, and glam-rock music come together explosively in John Cameron Mitchell's movie adaptation of his Off Broadway hit. Hedwig, a transsexual rocker, tours the dives of America in pursuit of her gorgeous, successful former protégé (Michael Pitt). Her band is called the Angry Inch (which also refers to the result of a botched sex-change operation), and her story unwinds in a series of monologues and rocking stage performances. Mitchell's confident, nonpandering direction brings out cheeky performances from his actors, and songwriter Stephen Trask's tunes, worthy of Bowie at his gender-bending best, wrap the film in loving, outré fashion.—*Bruce Diones* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

JURASSIC PARK III
A further rematch of *Homo sapiens* versus the velociraptor, with honors fairly even by the end. The raptor has longer teeth and, we now learn, more refined social skills, but man has the satellite phone. After an absence of one movie, Dr. Alan Grant (Sam Neill) returns to a dino-packed island with a bullish assistant (Alessandro Nivola) and a couple of lily-livered adventurers (William H. Macy and Téa Leoni). The result, directed not by Steven Spielberg but by Joe Johnston, is the most streamlined installment of the franchise so far. For your money, you get no ethics lectures, not much science, and a handful of half-baked characters; everything is set, in other words, for a spirited game of chase-and-chew. Isn't that why you bought a ticket in the first place? In English and Raptorspeak, though sadly without subtitles.—*A.L.* (7/23/01) (Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

LAURA
Everybody's favorite chic murder mystery. Gene Tierney is the dead girl who ends up as the heroine; Clifton Webb and Vincent Price are her suitors; Dana Andrews is the charmingly necrophiliac detective; and Judith Anderson is modishly contemptible. Produced and directed by Otto Preminger; released in 1944.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; Aug. 10-12.)

LEGALLY BLONDE
The fabulous Elle Woods (Reese Witherspoon), a West Coast sorority queen, follows her escaping boyfriend to Harvard Law School, where she shows up wearing leather and carrying a Chihuahua in her arms. The first-time director Robert Luketic displays a talent for candied artifice and gentle parody, but "Legally Blonde" collapses very quickly into low-grade farce. Almost everyone at Harvard is a jerk or a phony, and the plot, including a murder trial, is sitcom-obvious. See it only for the talented Witherspoon, who manages to embody the Cosmo girl, Lancômed to the hilt.—*D.D.* (7/16/01) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Union Square, and Waverly.)

LUMUMBA
Raoul Peck tells the story of the African freedom fighter Patrice Lumumba with fire and grace. The opening scene sets the vérité tone with the sound of a saw cutting through bone; two Belgian soldiers are breaking down Lumumba's body and incinerating it in a ten-gallon drum. From there, the film backtracks to the origins of the Congolese independence movement and proceeds to explain how a man's legacy could be so threatening. Peck handles all of this, including the atrocities, with refinement, and lets the drama of Lumumba's story run smoothly, free of heavy historical detail. Eriq Ebouaney is extraordinary in the lead role, the production feels emotionally true, and the speeches generate spontaneous applause. In French and Lingala.—*Michael Agger* (BAM Rose Cinemas and Film Forum.)

MADE
Jon Favreau and Vince Vaughn reprise their Mutt-and-Jeff act from "Swingers," but this time in a context uncertainly derived from Martin Scorsese's "Mean Streets." A nasty Los Angeles crime boss (Peter Falk) sends the two men—amateurs as criminals—to New York to do a job. The heavyset Favreau is morose and fearful and just wants to come home in one piece; Vaughn, boastful, unreliable, and stupid, has the time of his life. Favreau, who wrote and directed, veers back and forth between comedy and a more serious tone, and the movie winds up suspended in the air. The two actors try to pull the entire story out of their friendship with each other, but the psychological underpinnings are missing: we never really understand what holds this odd couple together. With Sean (Puffy) Combs, viciously incisive as a downtown Manhattan gangster.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

THE NAVIGATOR
Arguably, Buster Keaton's finest—but amongst the Keaton riches can one be sure? What isn't subject to debate is that this 1924 movie about a useless young millionaire (Keaton), who can't even shave himself, and his rich dizzy girlfriend (Kathryn McGuire) adrift on an enormous, deserted ocean liner without lights or steam is one of the greatest comedies ever made. Silent.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; Aug. 13.)

PAY OR DIE!
One of the all-time great pulp titles crowns a crude, flavorful 1960 melodrama set in New York in 1910. The director Richard Wilson and the screenwriters Richard Collins and Bertram Millhauser based this movie on the efforts of a real-life Italian-American cop, Joseph Petrosino (Ernest Borgnine), to cut off the Black Hand, a proto-Mafia, at the wrist. What the film lacks in moviemaking flair it makes up for in its still original slant on mighty pungent material.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; Aug. 14.)

PLANET OF THE APES
The apes are pretty terrific, especially Tim Roth as General Thade, a simian Fascist in samurai armor. They leap and roar like very active animals, not like actors in hoods. The director Tim Burton uses his patented black-on-black color palette, and the great cinematographer Philippe Rousselot puts a gleam into the ebony images. But if the movie's production skills are extraordinary, its dramatic skills are pathetic. Burton and his screenwriters never capture the grand sense of myth which made the original 1968 version so haunting. Even routine plot details are impossibly vague. Mark Wahlberg is vague, too. He doesn't have enough expression in his face to carry a movie alone, and "Apes" devolves into pointless chases and battles.—*D.D.* (8/6/01) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia I and II, 62nd and Broadway, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

THE SCORE
An intelligent and rather overcivilized caper movie that features three generations of great male actors: Marlon Brando (sounding like his long-ago nemesis Truman Capote) as an upper-class aesthete and fence with exquisite manners, Robert De Niro as a saturnine jazz-club owner and safecracker who never takes risks, and Edward Norton as a brilliant but willful young con man and criminal. The acting is so relaxed and skillful that one can enjoy the smooth precision as a virtue in itself. Unfortunately, the writers and the director, Frank Oz, worked out the plot without working out how the audience should feel about anything that happens. Emotionally the movie is neutered, and Oz seems to have trouble deciding whether he's making a thriller or another version of his double-cross comedy "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels."—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

SEXY BEAST
A tale of expatriate Cockneys, dry-roasted by the Spanish sun and determined to get England off their backs. Gal (Ray Winstone), once a crook, and his wife, Deedee (Amanda Redman), once a porno star, have retired to the Costa del Sol; now they are tracked down by an old acquaintance, Don (Ben Kingsley), who invites Gal back home for one last crime. Jonathan Glazer, the young British director making his début feature, turns the first half of the picture into a cool study of hotheads, saturated with creative cursing; the second half, which finds Gal returning to London, stumbles and slides into the grim traditions of gangsterland. But the movie needs to be seen for its clean compositions, its sure touch of fantasy, and, above all, for the forbidding presence of Kingsley—the prince of darkness, lightly disguised as a human being.—*A.L.* (6/18 & 25/01) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, 59th Street East Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

THEY WERE EXPENDABLE
Started soon after D Day and released in 1945, John Ford's tale of American defeat during the early months of the war in the Pacific centers on a dedicated, imaginative Navy lieutenant (Robert Montgomery) and his attempts to persuade superiors that his P.T. boats can fill the gap left by the destruction of the fleet. It is overlong and oddly shaped, and at times the writing isn't up to the feeling that Ford puts into it, but the picture is also magnificent. Few films have been so persuasive about the bonds that unify a squadron, or so piercing about the traumas that test them. The intense, understated Montgomery delivers a full and subtle portrait of leadership, and John Wayne, as Montgomery's more emotional second-in-command, demonstrates just how sincere and effective an actor he could be.—*M.S.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Aug. 12.)

WET HOT AMERICAN SUMMER
Michael Showalter and David Wain of the sketch-comedy group the State wrote and directed this hilarious coming-of-age marathon set at Camp Firewood, Maine, in August, 1981—a time when pulled-up white socks could be worn safely. What's impressive here is the pace; by cramming an entire summer of pranks, hookups, defeats, and comebacks into a single day, Wain and Showalter keep the jokes zipping along. Janeane Garofalo, David Hyde Pierce, Paul Rudd, Molly Shannon, and the other actors ham it up for laughs with a raunchiness tempered by deadpan earnestness. Best are the throwaway moments, such as when a Kenyan runner appears out of nowhere and sprints past everyone in capture the flag.—*M.A.* (Empire 25 and Village East Cinemas.)

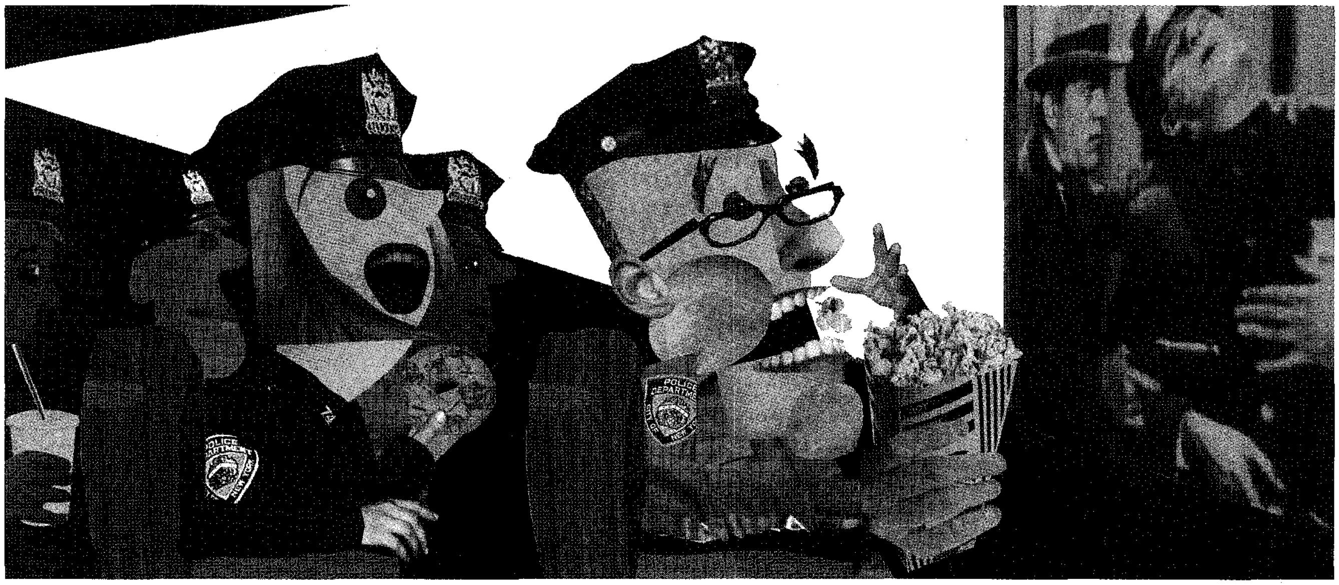
ALSO PLAYING

CURE
The Screening Room.
DIVIDED WE FALL
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.
DOWNTOWN 81
The Screening Room.
JACKPOT
Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Empire 25.
ORIGINAL SIN
Battery Park 16, Beekman, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.
THE RIVER
Cinema Village.
RUSH HOUR 2
Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, Sutton 1 and 2, and Union Square.
SCRAPPLE
Pioneer.
UNDER THE SUN
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.



"N.Y.P.D.," an eight-week retrospective of movies about New York's finest, begins at Film Forum on August 10.

STEPHEN KRONINGER

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Wednesdays, starting at dusk: Free outdoor movies at the Socrates Sculpture Park (Broadway at Vernon Blvd.), in Queens. The feature on Aug. 8 is "Wattstax" (1973, Mel Stuart). ♦ Through Sept. 9: "Hollywood on the Home Front: American Film in the 1940's." Aug. 11 at 2: "Monsieur Verdoux" (1947, Charles Chaplin). ♦ Aug. 11 at 4:15: "This Is the Army" (1943, Michael Curtiz). ♦ Aug. 12 at 1: "They Were Expendable" (†). ♦ Aug. 12 at 3:30: "The Best Years of Our Lives" (1946, William Wyler). ♦ Repertory night. Aug. 11-12 at 6:30: "Tom Jones" (1963, Tony Richardson).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (777-3456)—Through Aug. 31: Seven decades of cinema from Portugal. All films are in Portuguese. Aug. 8 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Glória" (1999, Manuela Viegas). ♦ Aug. 9 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Acto da Primavera" (1963, Manoel de Oliveira). ♦ Aug. 10 at 3:30, 6:30, and 9:40: "Word and Utopia" (2000, de Oliveira). ♦ Aug. 11 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "O Fantasma" (2000, João Pedro Rodrigues). ♦ Aug. 12 at 2, 5:20, and 8:40: "God's Comedy" (1995, João César Monteiro). ♦ The films of Gregg Araki. Aug. 13 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Totally F***ed Up" (1993). ♦ Through Aug. 28: A tribute to the director Guy Maddin. Aug. 14 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Heart of the World" (2000) and "Careful" (1992). ♦ Aug. 14 at 8:30 in Fort Greene Park: "Kirikou and the Sorceress" (1998, Michel Ocelot; in French).

BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: Free drive-in-style moviegoing. The feature on Aug. 13 is "Doctor Zhivago" (1965, David Lean).

CINEMA CLASSICS
332 E. 11th St. (677-5368)—Aug. 9-10 and Aug. 13 at 8 and 10; Aug. 11 at 6, 8, and 10; and Aug. 12 at 5, 7, and 9: "The 400 Blows" (1959, François Truffaut; in French).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Oct. 4: "N.Y.P.D," an eight-week festival of "crime and punishment, Gotham-style." Aug. 10-12 at 1, 4:35, and 8:10: "Detective Story" (1951, William Wyler). ♦ Aug. 10-12 at 2:55, 6:30, and 10:05: "Laura" (†). ♦ Aug. 14 at 1, 4:40, and 8:20: "Pay or Die!" (†). ♦ Aug. 14 at 3, 6:40, and 10:20: "The Mob" (1951, Robert Parrish). ♦ Mondays through Oct. 1: Buster Keaton classics. Aug. 13 at 2, 4:40, 7:20, and 10: "The Navigator" (†). ♦ Aug. 13 at 3:20, 6, and 8:40: Three shorts, "The Playhouse" (1921), "The Boat" (1921), and "Cops" (1922).

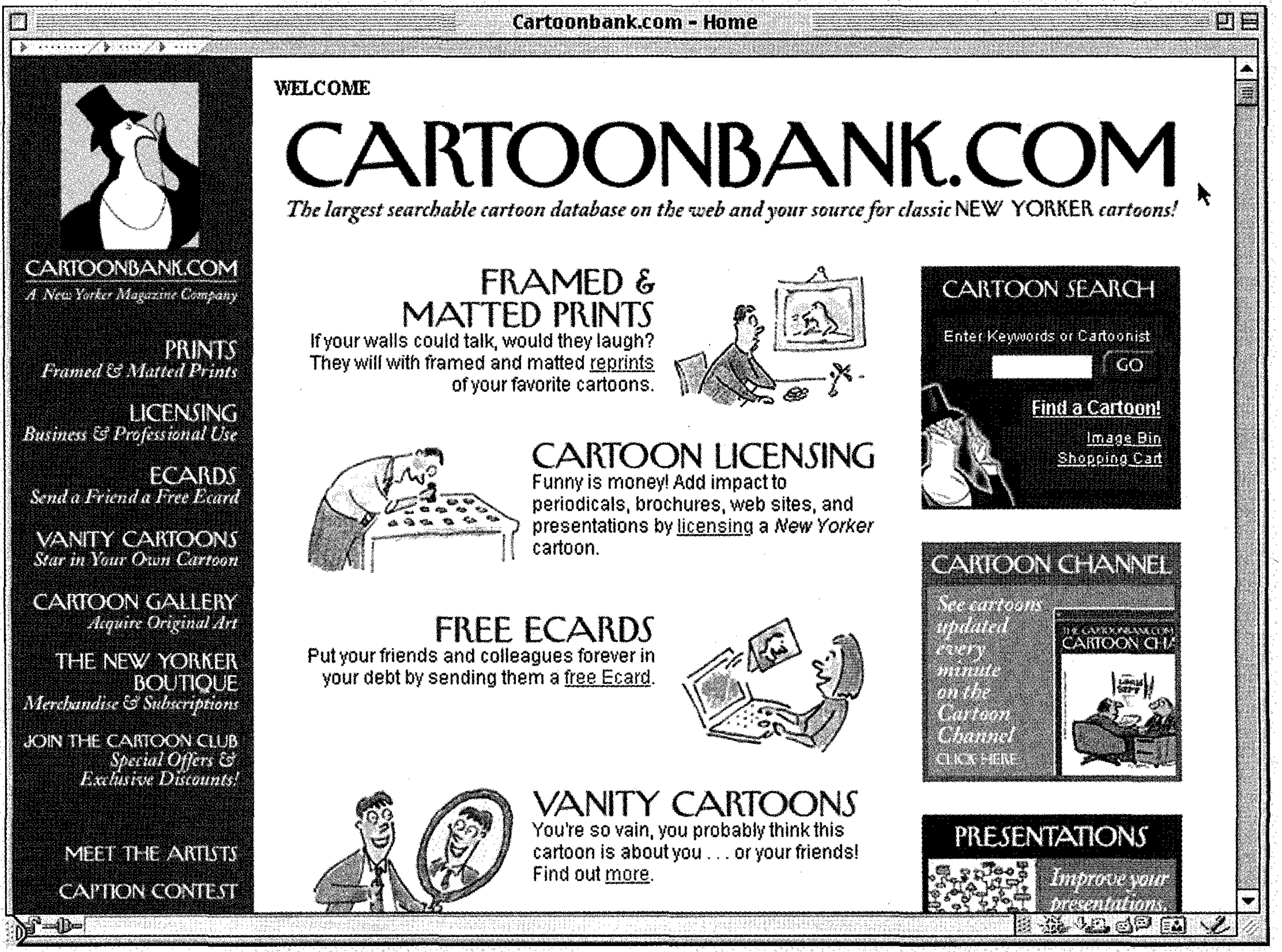
FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Through Aug. 14: "Women Behind the Camera." Aug. 14 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Love Me" (1999, Laetitia Masson; in French).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Sept. 7: A retrospective of the cinematography of James Wong Howe (1899-1976). Aug. 9 at 3:30: "Peter Pan" (1924, Herbert Brenon). ♦ Aug. 9 at 6 and Aug. 10 at 3:30: "The Spanish Dancer" (1923, Brenon) and "The Rough Riders (unedited footage)" (1927, Victor Fleming). ♦ Aug. 10 at 6 and Aug. 13 at 3:30: "Mantrap" (1926, Fleming). ♦ Aug. 10 at 8 and Aug. 11 at 2: "Hello, Sister!" (1933, Edwin Burke and Alfred Werker). ♦ Aug. 11 at 5 and Aug. 14 at 3:30: "Kings Row" (1942, Sam Wood). ♦ Aug. 12 at 2 and Aug. 13 at 6: "The Hard Way" (1942, Vincent Sherman). ♦ Aug. 12 at 5: "Hangmen Also Die!" (1943, Fritz Lang). ♦ Aug. 14 at 6: "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (1938, Norman Taurog).

THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO
25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Sept. 16: "Hello, Goodbye," screenings of pilots, premières, and final episodes of classic television shows. Thursdays through Sundays at 3. ♦ Restored silent films with full orchestration. Aug. 10 at 6 and Aug. 11-12 at 2: "Sunrise" (1927, F. W. Murnau).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Aug. 9: "Dirk Bogarde: Gentleman in the Shadows." Aug. 8 at 4:30: "Darling" (1965, John Schlesinger). ♦ Aug. 9 at 4 and 10: "The Spanish Gardener" (1956, Philip Leacock). ♦ Through Sept. 5: "Latin Beat 2001!," recent films from Latin America. Unless otherwise noted, all films are in Spanish. Aug. 10 at 4, Aug. 12 at 9:15, and Aug. 13 at 3:15: "It Happened in Havana" (2000, Daniel Diaz Torres). ♦ Aug. 10 at 6:15, Aug. 12 at 3:30, and Aug. 14 at 1: "Red Ink" (2000, Francisco Lombardi). ♦ Aug. 10 at 9:15, Aug. 12 at 6:30, and Aug. 14 at 3:30: "Without a Trace" (2000, María Novaro). ♦ Aug. 11 at 3:30 and Aug. 13 at 1 and 8:30: "Captain Pantoja and the Special Services" (1999, Lombardi). ♦ Aug. 11 and Aug. 13 at 6:15: "Viva Cepeda!" (1999, Mario Díaz) and "A Soccer Story" (2000, Paulo Machline; in Portuguese). ♦ Aug. 11 at 8:30: "How to Create a Rumba" (1999, Iván Acosta). ♦ Movies for kids. Aug. 11-12 at 1: "Ra-Tim-Bum Castle" (2000, Cao Hamburger; in Portuguese).

Online Punch Lines!



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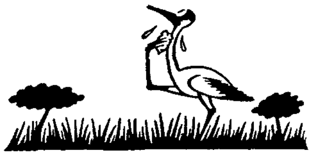
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
HOT AND COLD



In 1610, Nicolas de Crans, a deputy commissioner in Savoy, set out to investigate some extraordinary events that had recently been reported in the high Alpine valley of Chamonix. Farmers there were complaining that their land was disappearing; entire fields that had yielded rich harvests of wheat and rye were now under ice. They led Crans up the valley to the Des Bois glacier, which he described as "terrible and frightening to look on." It had, he wrote in a report, "ruined a good part of the land and all the village of Chastellard and quite carried away another little village called Bonnenuict."

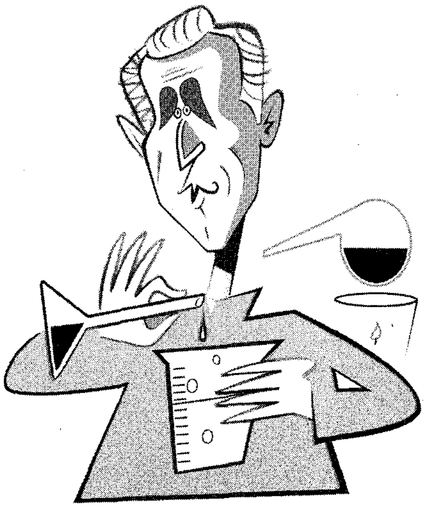
The ice was still on the move some thirty years later, according to a second report, which noted that the glacier "advances by over a musket shot every day, even in the month of August." Fearing that the encroachment represented divine retribution for human sins, the local magistrates petitioned a bishop in Geneva, who in June of 1644 led a three-hundred-person procession through the mountains. In the course of three days, the bishop blessed four glaciers, sprinkling them with holy water.

The Des Bois glacier is now called the Mer de Glace. It has withdrawn so far that its closest edge lies a good kilometre from the lost village of Chastellard and it is no longer even visible from the valley it once invaded. As it retreats, along with glaciers all around the world, we find ourselves in the opposite situation of the pious, if unfortunate, citizens of Chamonix—and in much the same one.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT RISKO

Last month, exhausted representatives from a hundred and seventy-eight nations finally signed on to the Kyoto Protocol. The agreement, which was endorsed by all of the world's industrialized nations except the United States, amounts to a remarkable, multicultural expression of fear and, to a somewhat lesser extent, penitence. The participants committed themselves over the next decade to reducing their combined annual greenhouse-gas emissions to five per cent below 1990 levels.

The American refusal to sign on fits a by now familiar pattern. Anything that is in any way constricting, especially to the Bush Administration's allies—energy conservation, tighter water-quality standards, emission limits—is to be viewed with caution: who knows if it'll work? Christie Whitman, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, defended the Kyoto decision, saying that, given the state of the research, it would be premature to accept that accord, or any other. "We're still a long way from knowing how to solve the problem," she asserted.



This philosophy was also at work last week in the House, when lawmakers approved the President's energy bill and rejected an amendment to raise fuel-efficiency standards—something the White House had opposed on the ground that the new standards were arbitrary. (Wariness, however, did not prevent Whitman from ordering a full-scale dredging of the Hudson, a move that actually does carry some risk but which many saw as a crucial boost to the reëlection bid of New York's Republican governor, George Pataki.)

Kyoto follows on the research efforts of thousands of physicists, geochemists, oceanographers, botanists, limnologists, and paleoclimatologists, who have, with virtual unanimity, established two main points. The first is that human activity is changing the atmosphere in unprecedented ways; the second is that the earth is warming up. Nonetheless, the link between the two does remain inexact. Five years ago, scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated that the earth's temperature would rise two to six degrees over the coming century; this past spring, after a reassessment that drew upon hundreds of new studies, the panel both raised its estimate and doubled the range of possibilities, saying that the increase could be anywhere from three to eleven degrees.

This imprecision does not represent a lack of progress. Analysis of lake sediments, glaciers, and deep ocean cores, together with the work of computer modellers, has revealed that the earth's climate, even without human influence, is unstable, given to sudden and violent shifts at unpredictable intervals. This inherent instability makes the impact of global warming that much more difficult to predict, and makes devising a solution that would meet Whitman's standards potentially impossible. At the same time, the ultimate costs of inaction threaten to be that much more catastrophic.

The Kyoto Protocol's measures may well prove ineffective, as the Bush Administration fears—so much holy water poured on a vanishing glacier. (Already, our experiment with the earth's atmosphere has raised CO_2 levels higher than they have been for a half-million years, and they're rapidly approaching levels that haven't been seen since the age of the dinosaurs.) But refusing to sign the protocol on scientific grounds reflects a deep misunderstanding—or, more likely, misrepresentation—of what climate science has accomplished. Kyoto is, at the least, a gesture of responsibility and an acknowledgment of an essential condition of ethical action, which is, and always has been, uncertainty.

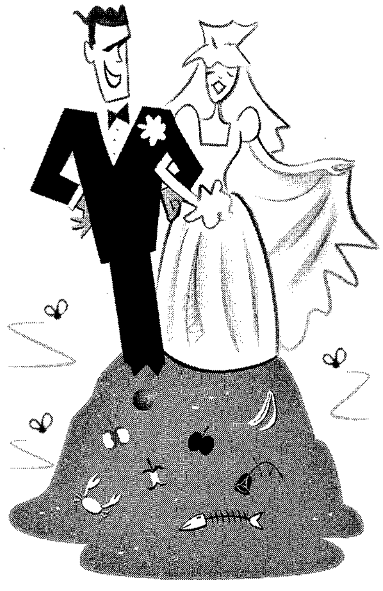
—*Elizabeth Kolbert*

BRIDAL REGISTRY
WILL YOU MULCH ME?

The week before last, several dozen members of the country's food establishment received a curious wedding announcement via E-mail.

"This Saturday, July 28, at 3:00 P.M. I will wed my mulchmate Kate McDermott, who I met on the GardenWeb.com soil, compost, and mulch forum," wrote Jon Rowley, a fifty-seven-year-old seafood expert in Seattle who, in the past several years, has turned his attention from surf to turf and become obsessed with gardening.

"The altar will be at one of the compost stations at the Interbay P-Patch Community Garden, where I am currently the Site Coordinator," he wrote.



"Making a Wedding Compost will be a symbolic part of our vows. Guests will participate in this miracle of renewal by contributing 'brown,' 'green,' or 'brown and green' ingredients for the compost."

Rowley explained that the contributions would become humus for a commemorative planting of a Wedding Rose. "I would be honored to receive your leftover lobster shells, vacuum-cleaner bags, coffee grounds, poached-salmon carcass, pet llama's manure, banana peels, dryer lint, moldy vegetables from your fridge."

The request left a number of professional connoisseurs stumped. What, they wondered, constituted wedding-worthy garbage? For guidance, some studied E-mail updates that Rowley was sending out as new offerings arrived. Bill Rice, a food writer for the Chicago *Tribune*, had made a luminous mosaic from his leftovers, with recipe attached ("one skin of Wisconsin natural smoked trout, cut up . . ."). Julia Child had sent a single, perfect banana peel, gift-wrapped. Corporate donations—spent hops and grains from a local brewery, pulp from several local juice bars—had also been carted into Rowley's living room, where his fiancée, Kate McDermott, a forty-eight-year-old pianist and gardener, catalogued each contribution.

"Nothing will beat the box of buffalo poo," McDermott wrote in an E-mail. "But romantically I love the bag of rose petals and fig leaves." (Rowley added later that the shipping cost for the dung, which was sent from Colorado, was $57.90.)

McDermott explained that compost was a fitting metaphor for the wedding, noting that she and Rowley have both been married before. "We are recycled ourselves," she said by telephone. "We're taking all the life experience that most people discard and turning it into something bountiful and full of life."

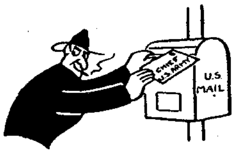
As the gifts poured in, Rowley's updates managed to disconcert some of his friends. "I got gift block," Melanie Young, a food publicist, said. Two days before the wedding, she packed the remains of her staff's Chinese-takeout lunch and some coffee grounds in a box and carried it to Federal Express. The man at the counter, she said, "suggested sending it for morning delivery, since it would really smell by afternoon." (Anticipating the stench problem, Sheila Lukins, a food columnist for *Parade*, sent dryer lint.) Jeffrey Steingarten, a food writer for *Vogue*, agonized for days over what to send. "You can return a gift from Tiffany," he said. "Garbage is different. You can't return garbage. And you can't throw it away, for it has already been thrown away." He added, "Jon could have spared us all a pile of anxiety by registering his compost needs with the New York City sanitation department." Ruth Reichl, the editor of *Gourmet*, missed the shipping deadline. "You have a year to send ordinary wedding presents," she said. "But I don't suppose this is one you can send late."

Others got the job done by stretching the definition of garbage. In her kitchen in Connecticut, the cookbook author Dorie Greenspan assembled a parcel of leftovers, paying special attention to the balance of flavors and colors. She was determined that her garbage arrive in Seattle looking "fresh and appetizing." She arranged trimmings from five different kinds of heirloom tomato, stems from various herbs, and some "oniony stuff," chilled the mixture overnight in a plastic container, and sent it out, along with two slices of fresh chocolate layer cake filled with chocolate ganache flavored with raspberry purée and iced with a bittersweet-chocolate glaze. The cake wasn't technically garbage, but Greenspan felt that her contribution needed a sweet note. "I cheated," she said.

So did Steingarten, who eventually sent two dozen fresh peaches. They were not bruised, and they cost seventy-five dollars to ship, but they were, in his view, a type of trash. Their flavor, he said, was "inadequate."

—*Molly O'Neill*

MYSTERY MAIL
SIR CAM, I PRESUME?



We're accustomed to using biological metaphors to talk about computer viruses ("You have been infected with the Love Bug"), but, as runaway viruses have begun to sweep across the increasingly connected datasphere, they have started to seem more like hurricanes than like microbes. A few weeks ago, anti-virus-software makers began tracking a program (technically called a worm) that was spreading from computer to computer. It had a name: W32.SirCam—SirCam, for short. At first, they were seeing just a handful of cases an hour, but within a few days SirCam had increased to nearly a hundred an hour, and, as with a pressure system building over the Atlantic, the forecasters were predicting that things were only going to get worse. The worm was raised to a level-three warning (as in the hurricane system, the most dangerous viruses are level five), and, all across the world, sophisticated computer users began virtually taping their windows and moving the lawn furniture indoors. SirCam may not have been as widespread or as insidious as the Code Red worm (another virus that wreaked havoc last week), but it was perhaps more imaginative, in the way that it rifled through your computer and turned up embarrassing stuff, as though your hard drive were your underwear drawer.

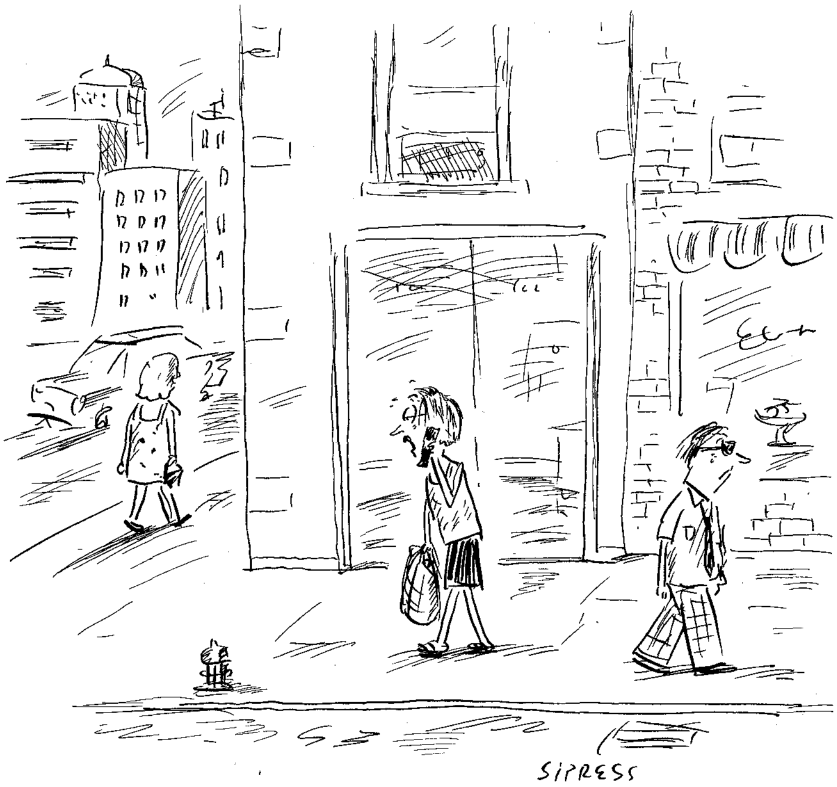
Like many other successful worms, SirCam replicates by searching users' address books and then automatically mailing itself to all the addresses it finds. Within days, thousands of computer users found their in-boxes swamped with meaningless messages. By the end of the fifth day, SirCam had been upgraded to level four.

With each new conquest, SirCam selected a random document from the victim's hard drive and forwarded that file to all the E-mail addresses it discovered. The result was as much a case of public humiliation as one of info-terrorism: SirCam might randomly select something from your Star Trek-erotica collection or the first draft of your Backstreet Boys fan letter and send it out to everyone in your address book.

In the process, SirCam made for an interesting sociological study. Browse through the hundreds of random documents that SirCam deposited in any victim's in-box, and you'll get a fine sample of what fills up people's hard drives. One informal survey produced no salacious data, no hardcore pornography, and no secret memos from Osama bin Laden. The most common document title, by far, was "Résumé," which may say something about the current economic climate. But there were a few gems, ranging from the ambitious ("Important Aspects of Language and Reality") to the despairing ("HOPELESSLYSTUCK"), and some stirring creative efforts: the auspiciously titled "My Peom," "breakfast w santa," "the devil is a red woman drinking cognac," and "Scene one begins with Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz giving a funeral sermon about an old dead Jewish woman."

Normally, worms that replicate via address books tend to arrive from names you recognize, since most people who have your E-mail address are people you've been in contact with. But SirCam was delivering mail from total strangers. After some study, the virus wizards concluded that, in addition to scanning your address book for new victims, SirCam also scans what is called the "browser cache," an invisible document that stores the text of Web pages you have visited recently. (The list of sites that Chandra Levy visited before her disappearance was culled from that source, too.) SirCam scoured those pages for any E-mail addresses they contained, and fired off messages to those people as well.

SirCam's cache-scanning ability created a strange kind of public intimacy. If, for example, your E-mail address is published on your personal home page, you might wake up one morning to find Sir-

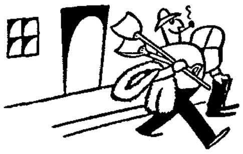


"It's not the heat or the humidity. It's the self-recrimination over not finding a way to get out of the city this summer."

Cam sending you random files from people to whom you seem totally unconnected. But it turns out that a connection does exist: these are people who share the experience of visiting your page. In its roundabout, malevolent way, SirCam is introducing you to people who may have recently read something about you (or even by you), and is sending along a randomly chosen document from their private collection as a token of appreciation. It's hard not to feel an attachment to those names, those secret sharers filling up your in-box, connected and, at the same time, disconnected, like a band of strangers huddled together beneath a gathering storm.

—*Steven Johnson*

RUCKUS DEPT.
EXIT THE WU-TANG



One evening last week, a small crowd of passersby gathered on the sidewalk in front of 99 University Place, a squat office building in Greenwich Village, to watch a man tossing boxes and trash bags into the street. Before long, a dozen people had set upon the stuff—it being acceptable, in New York, to root through promising garbage, as long as other people are doing it, too.

The boxes were full of papers, files, posters, CDs, and tapes. Within minutes, word got around that everything belonged to the Wu-Tang Clan, the groundbreaking hip-hop collective originally from Staten Island. "Yo, is it true?" one onlooker asked. "Has O.D.B. been evicted?" It was not true: O.D.B., or Ol' Dirty Bastard, one of Wu-Tang's founding members, had not been evicted (though two weeks earlier he had been convicted—for possession of marijuana and crack—and sentenced to two to four years in prison). A few weeks ago, the Wu-Tang Clan—or, rather, the various corporate Wu-Tang entities that make up the vast Wu-Tang empire—vacated its offices on the ninth floor of 99 University Place, and now the superintendent was throwing out what had been left behind. Scavengers dug through the refuse and made off with portable stacks of loot. This is what one of them found:

- Four vinyl LPs (including such cuts as "As High As Wu Get," "Duck Seazon," and "Dogshit").
- Seven airline tickets, unused, issued to Robert Diggs, a.k.a. RZA, the leader of the Wu-Tang Clan.
- A dozen parking tickets issued to Robert Diggs or to Mitchell Diggs, who is identified on one as "Master Killer."
- A spec script for a video called "BUST A SLUG," about "a day in the life of the NOTORIOUS ORGANIZED CRIME figures known as THE WU-SYNDICATE." (One character is named Maya Lansky.)
- Blank checks from the account of O.D.B. Entertainment, Inc.
- Wu-Tang, Inc., bank statements (deposit of $585,000 on February 4, 1999).
- A copy of New York State security-guard-license law.
- A Wu-Tang Productions contract rider enumerating backstage catering requirements for a Wu-Tang artist named Shyheim: "baked fish (whiting and flounder), 1 case of Heineken beer, 1 case of Ballantine ale, fried chicken *in vegetable oil only* for 14 people . . . bread (fresh Italian bread only), mints, Centurion vitamins, ice, condoms, 1 box of White Owl cigars, 2 tables for merchandise."
- A company policy statement, mandating that, among other things, "there will be no abusive language towards your co-workers or artists . . . no smoking, drinking, or usage of any other drug or alcohol related substances in the office PERIOD, business hours or not."
- A memo in which the Wu-Tang's record company reprimands employees of the Wu Foundation for their apparent failure to recognize a dear friend of the Wu-Tang Clan: "Did you not know she is O.D.B.'s mother?"

—*Jill Rackmill*

POSTSCRIPT
HELEN STARK

In the disconnected way things happen sometimes, many friends and former colleagues of Helen Stark, *The New Yorker's* longtime librarian, learned only recently of her death, last April. Helen worked in the *New Yorker* library for forty-seven years. She began in 1945, as an assistant to Ebba Jonsson, the magazine's first librarian; she became head librarian in 1970, when Miss Jonsson retired; and she continued until her own retirement, in 1992. In many respects, Helen was what you might expect a librarian to be—quiet, careful, precise, dressed in skirts that came to mid-calf, heavy stockings, sensible shoes, her graying hair carefully coiffed. But she offset these sober traits with a canny gleam in her eye and a whooping laugh that called to mind someone going down the first hill on a roller coaster. If you were her colleague and you happened to run into her away from the office, she could surprise you with a bear hug that almost knocked the wind out of you.

Except for a few years during the Second World War, when she accompanied her husband, Ira, on his various postings with the Navy, Helen lived her whole life on the Upper West Side. She was born Helen Louise Lennig in 1919, went to Julia Richman High School, got a degree in French from Hunter College and a master's in library science from Columbia. She married Ira, the son of her family doctor, in 1942. They were married for fifty-nine years, and had a son, Paul. Helen liked reading and she liked to travel, and she and Ira were active alumni of the University of Alabama, Ira's alma mater. (She was unexpectedly well informed on the subject of Paul "Bear" Bryant, the Alabama football coach, whom she had met and talked to.) Mainly, though, Helen's life was *The New Yorker*. She did her job impeccably, the neatness of the library files even today a testament to her. If you wanted to know about a specific article in the magazine, Helen could tell you who had written it and when it had run, usually off the top of her head; young writers who worried that they might be pursuing a topic that had been done could find out quickly by asking her. She was an unfailingly encouraging presence to meet every day in the office, to talk to at an office party, or to run into in the hall. Civilization, when you look closely at it, actually rests on about eleven unsung people, and Helen was one of them. We are sorry she's gone.

—*Ian Frazier*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
FAST TIMES AT NASDAQ HIGH

One recent Friday, on the trading floor of one of the biggest and busiest firms on Wall Street, a phalanx of traders, in their casual-khaki best, waited placidly in front of their computer screens for the market to close. The phones were not ringing; the place was so quiet you could hear the purr of the air-conditioning. To pass the time, two traders tossed a football back and forth. Others sat around rereading the *Journal* or making weekend plans. One woman was curled up in a chair, asleep. "It's dead today," a trader said. "There is nothing going on."

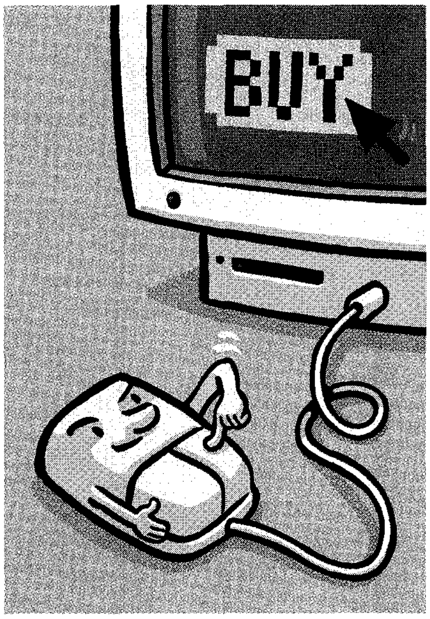
It seemed to be just another sluggish summer Friday on the Street, made even more so by recalcitrant stock prices and dismal corporate profits. Yet, somehow, a stunning amount of work got done that afternoon. By the end of the day, investors had bought and sold 1.64 billion shares of Nasdaq stocks, with more than thirty-seven billion dollars changing hands. Just two years ago, a day on which 1.64 billion shares were traded would have ranked as the busiest in the history of Wall Street. But now it's run of the mill. Volume is as high as it has ever been.

How can this be? After all, the bursting of the tech bubble has left investors more disenchanted with stocks than at any point in the past five years. People have less money to invest than they did in 1999. Money managers are supposedly on the sidelines waiting for the market to perk up, and day traders are supposedly broke. So why are people trading Nasdaq stocks twice as frequently as they were in the heyday of the bull market?

The answer lies sixty miles northeast of New York City, in a tranquil office park in Trumbull, Connecticut, where Nasdaq has built a fifty-eight-thousand-square-foot "data center." If the stock market is a giant nervous system, then Trumbull is its central ganglion. Inside, servers route orders and execute and report trades. Mainframes keep track of every bid and ask price on every Nasdaq stock. Rows of data-storage units record the information. Amid all this hardware there are hardly any people. It's like a 2 P.M. showing of "A.I."

The data center is constantly getting bigger, even as its machines are getting faster. Every year, Nasdaq adds more and more capacity, anticipating more and more trading. And every year the traders trade more than Nasdaq anticipated. In fact, adding capacity seems to encourage traders to take advantage of it.

Environmental engineers call this phenomenon "induced traffic." In the nineteen-seventies and eighties, California went on a road-building binge to ease the congestion on its highways. Add more lanes, the thinking went, and you'd get less congestion. Instead, the highways stayed clogged, because, as the number of lanes rose, so did the number of cars. Increasing supply, in other words, only increased demand. The same thing is happening in the stock market. The technological upgrades make the markets more fluid, providing more opportunities, millisecond by millisecond, to buy and sell shares.



The effects of "induced traffic" are magnified by what Nasdaq's chief technology officer, Steve Randich, calls "Greenspan events." A Greenspan event is any news event that can move the whole market, the most obvious example being an interest-rate cut by the Federal Reserve. In the last two years, trading volume in response to Greenspan events has increased far more sharply even than volume in general. "What we see now is a tidal wave of transactions that hits as soon as the news breaks," Randich says. "It's ten times what we normally see. And the effect is only getting stronger."

When Randich thinks about the Nasdaq system, the Greenspan events are what worry him. It's like designing the water system for New York: you want it to hold up even if every toilet in town gets flushed at once. When the Fed announced in April that it was cutting interest rates, the biggest wave of trading hit just three seconds afterward. So Randich keeps building more pipes to deal with moments like that, which, in turn, induces more traffic on the normal days, too. That's why on a typical July afternoon traders are buying and selling more shares than they did on any Greenspan-event day in 1999.

Another consequence of the ceaseless technological upgrades is that with heavily traded stocks, like Microsoft and Intel, prices often change several times a second. Depending on when you hit "Send," you can pay $65.81, $65.83, or $65.80 for a share of Microsoft. The more often prices change, the more chances there are—in theory—to take advantage of those changes by buying low and selling high. Trading begets more trading.

To get that advantage, you have to move faster than any human being—even a super-trader—possibly can. So more and more of the trading is done by computers that are programmed to follow certain rules about risk and price and are then sent out to buy and sell. "A lot of what we're doing is just watching machines talk to machines," Randich said. The computers toil while the traders toss the football back and forth. All the humans have to do is make sure the machines follow the rules.

On that same Friday in July, at the Nasdaq "command center" deep inside the Trumbull complex, a lone technician sat, like that guy in "The Matrix," watching stacks of computer screens and monitoring a cascade of data—every price offered, every bid hit in the Nasdaq universe. Each second brought a thousand new prices. Block trades of Microsoft and Cisco flickered by. It was an ordinary day: busy, quiet. Somewhere in Manhattan, a trader drifted off to sleep.

—*James Surowiecki*

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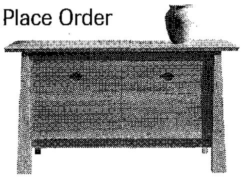
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NEW YORK JOURNAL

THAT SUNDAY

It was just one afternoon in a jazz club forty years ago.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

Things in New York begin either six flights up or one flight down and then just vanish. All the wonders that Henry James wondered at a century ago—the Waldorf-Astoria, the Metropolitan Opera—are gone, and the wonders that he didn't wonder at but that we know enough to wonder at now—say, Albert Ryder's room in the Village—are gone, too. The past, even the immediate past, in New York is organized more or less like the cemetery in Venice: the skeletons are buried and then, after a dozen years, dug up and evicted and thrown onto a second island, in a mixed-up heap of remembrance. New Yorkers live on that second island, and sort through crazy heaps of memory to find a past. There are compensations for our indifference, though. Freed from its connection to its origins, the past has more carry. Nothing calls it home, and the picture or the poem or the piano part often just keeps on travelling, past the original audience and into the world, the way that, though the Polo Grounds are gone, Bobby Thomson's home run is still travelling over that fence.

Exactly forty years ago this summer, on June 25, 1961, three young jazz musicians—the piano player Bill Evans, the bass player Scott LaFaro, and the drummer Paul Motian—went down to a New York basement, smoked, yawned, joked a bit, and got to work. The trio played thirteen songs, most of them slow: "My Romance," "I Loves You, Porgy," and even a waltz from the Walt Disney movie "Alice in Wonderland." The music they made was recorded, and was released later that year by a small independent label called Riverside. The album's title was "Sunday at the Village Vanguard." Later in the year, another record from that afternoon was released, called "Waltz for Debby," after one of the songs. Since then, the same two and a half hours has been repackaged and rereleased and remastered and reconsidered, in albums called, among other things, "The Village Vanguard Sessions" and "At the Village Vanguard."

It is easy to cite worshipful jazz-crit passages about them, concerning intonation and modal passages and singing tones, though none of the writing itself has the least emotional force. It is difficult to explain the force the music does have, since it is not particularly forceful. People who don't respond to it are puzzled that anyone hears anything in it at all. They say that it sounds like "background music," or like cocktail music. Philip Larkin, acerbic but sound, said that it had a Pierrot-in-moonlight quality, and how you feel about it, perhaps, depends on how you feel about Pierrot in moonlight. As the jazz critic Ira Gitler pointed out in the original liner notes, Evans was at the time an aficionado of Zen Buddhism, and the music he made was meditative and tuneful, between Suzuki and Snow White.

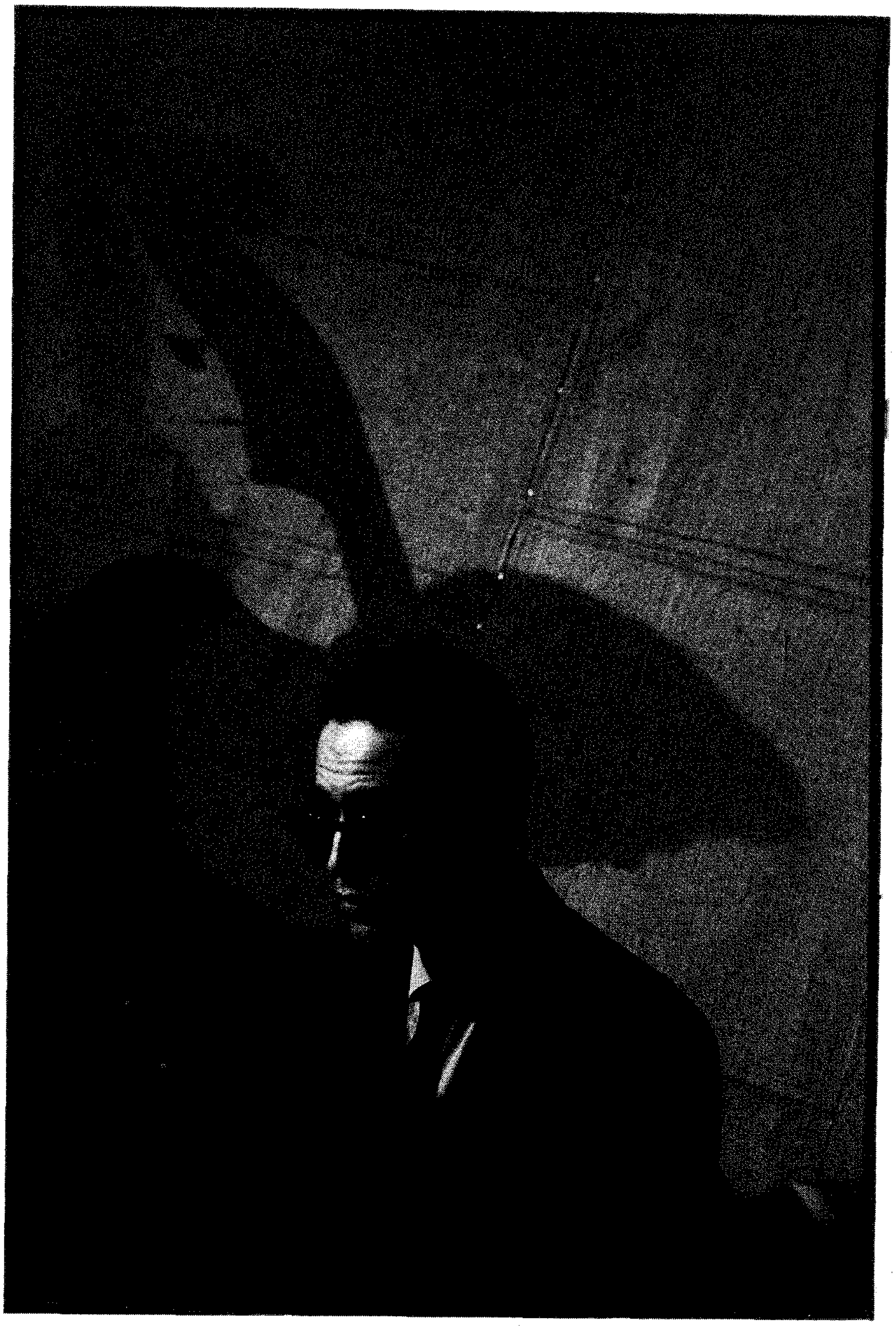
If you are vulnerable to this music, however, you are completely vulnerable to it. Bill Evans has no casual fans. After that afternoon, his name became synonymous with a heartbreak quality that is not like anything else in music. It is not little-boy-lost or blue, like Miles Davis, but transparent and wistful. Evans's solos on "Alice in Wonderland" and "My Foolish Heart" and, especially, "Porgy" have a mother-of-pearl tone, singing and skipping, as though they were being played on the celesta or the xylophone. They are as close to pure emotion, produced without impediments—not at all the same thing as an entire self poured out without inhibitions, the bebop dream—as exists in music. His music hints at the secret truth that New York is sad before it is busy, and that it is a kind of inverted garden, with all the flowers blooming down in the basements.

This particular basement, the Village Vanguard, still stands, or cowers, under Seventh Avenue. And three of the people who were there that particular afternoon—the producer, the drummer, and the club owner—were in town on the weekend of the fortieth anniversary. On June 24th and 25th of this year, it was possible to speak to them, and to get them to ruminate a bit on how the afternoon happened, why so many people now remember it, why earnest French and Japanese scholars and collectors brood and argue over and analyze it, and what it all has to do with the still potent romantic formula of city lights, early death, and the piano.

The facts of Bill Evans's life, and of the events leading to that afternoon, are easy to find. Bill Evans was born in 1929 in New Jersey, into a Russian Orthodox family. He studied music at Southeastern Louisiana College, of all places, and graduated playing flute and piano and violin—a prodigy. He was one of the first jazz musicians who knew Schubert and Nat King Cole equally well, and he thought that he could get more of the spirit of Schubert by playing like Nat Cole than by playing like Arthur Rubinstein. He came to New York in 1955, scuffled around, and then was taken up by Miles Davis. In 1958, Evans joined Davis's group for eight months—the only white musician in the sextet—and then played piano on Davis's "Kind of Blue," for which, by most accounts, he collaborated on many of the basic tunes. Davis gave him noise—a sudden credibility in the suspicious jazz world—but he gave Davis quiet. He sounded "like crystal notes or sparkling water," Davis said.

Evans recorded a few albums with bass players and drummers around New York and then, in 1959, discovered the young bass player Scott LaFaro, who played the bass as if it were a guitar, freely and melodically, rather than dutifully and as a blue-collar obligation. Paul Motian, a poetic, brushes-and-silver-high-hat drummer, joined them, and what is usually called "the first trio" was born. They made a very good record together, "Portrait in Jazz"—all their album titles tried to hit a slightly Lane Coutell, suède-elbow-patches note then seen as "intellectual"—and, in 1960, they went on the road.

Orrin Keepnews produced both Vanguard records, and on June 25th forty years later he happened to be staying at the Algonquin (jazz impresarios of his vintage maintain a high regard for the Algonquin), and he settled down in the lobby to talk. In his late seventies, he lives now in San Francisco, where he still produces jazz recordings. He is a small, burly bear of a man, still wearing a fifties bongos-and-beatniks goatee. He is also a world-champion digresser, sending out long skeins of words, which bend back and dissolve into the previous ones.


Meditative and tuneful: Bill Evans in 1962. Photograph by William Claxton.

"To understand that day you have to understand this about the time: jazz was a prevalent music, but it wasn't a popular music," he said. "People read about it and talked about it and it got written about, and you could hear the occasional hit—a 'Take Five'—on AM radio, but basically it didn't sell. If a record sold a few thousand copies, we were quite pleased. On the Sunday, I was working dials and worrying about power outages—we had one early—and the rest of the time I was worrying about Bill. What was striking about Bill from the beginning wasn't the quality of his playing—there were a lot of good players—but the quality of his self-criticism. He was always genuinely ready to learn. The trouble with Bill—and, as much as anything, that was the cause for our deciding to record him live—was always persuading Bill to play at all. He had very low self-esteem. That's what drew him to Scott. Scott was already a rumor even before he was a whisper—everyone had heard of this phenomenal bass player, and when they started working together what was clear from the first was that Bill had something very different in mind from the normal interplay of piano with bass. Most so-called trio records are just an accompanied piano player—the bass player's function is to emancipate the pianist's left hand. Bill was looking for something very different—a joined-together kind of thing.

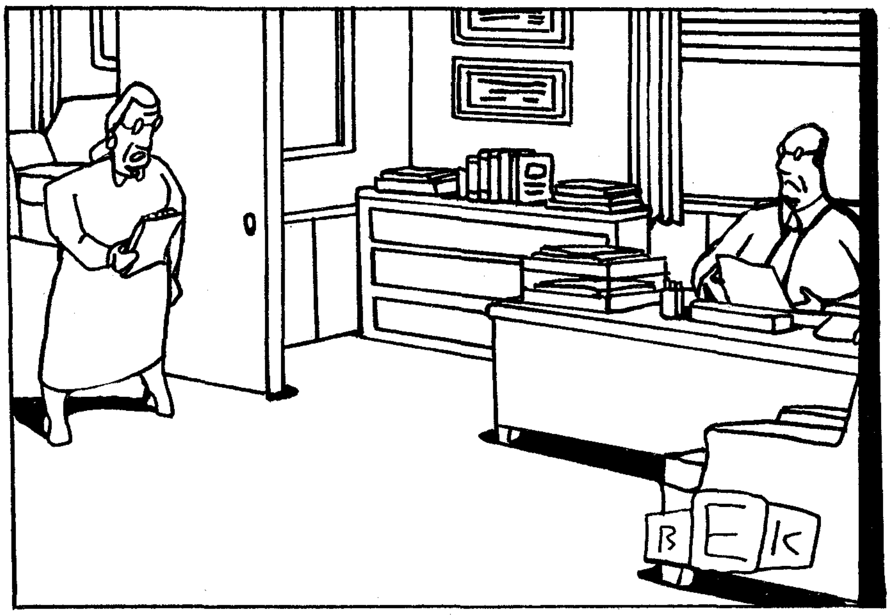
"We chose Sunday because we knew that we had two shows, the afternoon matinée and the evening show, and we would have both. Live recording was pretty much in its infancy. Today, you'd have a van with a studio inside, but we just had portable Ampex equipment, which I think we lined up by the banquette. Bill was tough, of course. Even after we had made the first record with the trio, he didn't believe that he had enough to express. He was brutally self-critical. I used to joke about forming a Demon Band of musicians who never thought they were good enough, never thought they had got it right. The Demon Band would have included Sonny Rollins on sax, J. J. Johnson on trombone, Wes Montgomery on guitar, and Bill on piano. It seemed to have an inordinate number of my musicians. Finally, I realized that the Demon Band could never really exist, because we could never find a drummer. No drummer suffers from self-doubt."

Paul Motian is a drummer. Though he is seventy, he looks twenty-five years younger, kept limber, it seems, by constant doses of the hipster skepticism proper to a jazz musician of his generation. He still plays regularly and will have a date at the Vanguard this month, and is looking for a publisher for his autobiography, "We Couldn't Find Philadelphia." He has kept his "gig books," recording where he played and how much he got, for the last forty-five years.

"We were *great*," he said that weekend, at a Hungarian strudel-and-coffee spot on Amsterdam Avenue. "But look at this—I got one hundred and thirty-six dollars for the famous legendary record, one hundred and ten for the gig, and one hundred and seven for the second record.

"Look at the gig book: here we are at the D.C. Showplace. That's where Bill said, first night, second night, 'Ladies and gentlemen—I don't feel like playing tonight. Can you understand that?' And they kind of did. Bill was sincere, and he had a great sense of humor. He was good, but I was good with him, you know, because I listened. We listened to each other, and you can still hear us listening when we play. Scott was tough on Bill. He was the one man who could be tough on Bill. Like if he didn't think the music sounded right—if it was great but not perfect—he'd say to Bill, 'Man, you're just fucking up the music. Go look at yourself in the mirror!' He'd even say it to me, when he didn't think I was playing right. And he had only been playing the bass for a few years.

"O.K., here's May, two weeks in Detroit, then in Toronto, and then here comes June, and there we are, booked at the Vanguard. Then I remember we were in Philadelphia and somebody said to us, 'Hey, you know, they're imitating the way you guys sounded in Detroit!' Imitating the way we sounded in Detroit! I knew then something was happening. Imagine people imitating the way you sounded in Detroit!"



"From 3 A.M. to four-thirty, I have you wondering if everything in your life has been a mistake."

Paul Motian and Orrin Keepnews had a clear memory of the afternoon, but what they remembered was work, not art: dials that rose and fell, and money counted out in three figures. Lorraine Gordon is the widow of Max Gordon, who invented the Vanguard. She helped run it then and still takes reservations for the club, and on the anniversary Sunday she was where she ought to be, and that was on the phone. "Vanguard. Yes, reservations are recommended. What if you have to cancel? You have to cancel." She hung up. "We're blessed, you know, because a Japanese tourist service makes regular visits. They love the idea of the Vanguard and, of course, they love jazz.

"In 1961, everything was changing, because of television," she said. "When Max opened the Vanguard, it was a place for poets. It was a speakeasy, a theatre after that, but it always had the same wedge shape. It was only in the late fifties that it became a jazz club. Sundays for us was a time when we had a relaxed crowd. And Max had a Steinway, which was replaced by a Yamaha, which Bill loved. Of course, I remember, was it that gig or the next, when Bill's left arm was paralyzed and he played anyway, balling a fist and bringing his hand banging down from the force of gravity."

Lorraine Gordon did not have to explain this image. Evans was, for most of his life, a drug addict. Lorraine Gordon saw him banging the left side of the keyboard with a paralyzed hand because he had been shooting up heroin and hit a nerve. "He'd been a junkie for a couple of years by then, and I had to slip him a few dollars," Keepnews said later. "I'm his friend, I'm his record company, I'm his producer. People say to me, 'Why couldn't you refuse him?' Look, he was going to find the money, junkies do, and I wasn't worried about him mugging someone in an alley. I was worried about him owing money to someone who would

BY A STREAM

The murmur of clear water on stones
in a gully deep in a tall forest.
Ferns brighten in the sun on the banks,
the stacked, ungraspable shapes of leaves,
lancet-like, sword-like,
heart-like, shovel-like,
notched, serrated,
saw-toothed—who will express it?
And the flowers! Whitish umbels,
deep blue chalices, bright yellow stars,
roselets, clusters.
To sit and to watch
the bustle of bumblebees, the flight of dragonflies,
the takeoff of a flycatcher,
in the tangle of twigs the hurry of the black beetle.
It seems that I hear the voice of a demiurge:
"Either speechless rocks, as on the first day of creation,
or life, whose condition is death,
and this beauty which elates you."

—*Czeslaw Milosz*

(*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.*)

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break his fingers if he didn't pay it back. So I advanced him money, and I refuse to think that I was doing anything wrong."

Paul Motian says, " 'I think I could play better'—that was what you always heard him saying, whatever he was thinking of trying, a hypnotist, a psychotherapist. Maybe he took drugs because he thought it made his music better." It is even sadly possible that the dreamy, otherworldly quality of Evans's playing that day had something to do with what was flowing in his veins.

On that Sunday afternoon in New York in 1961, the trio played five sets, about two and a half hours' worth of music. The numbers ran between five and ten minutes a turn. In the first three sets, knowing that the machines were running, they didn't repeat numbers, playing a lilting "Waltz for Debby," a hushed "My Foolish Heart," a floating "Alice in Wonderland," and an up-tempo "My Romance." Then, for the first time that day, Evans played "I Loves You, Porgy." In the last set, they ran back over numbers from the first few sets. By then, it was late, a long day's hard work, and they finished with a number by LaFaro, a strange 9/8 Zen thing called "Jade Visions." Throughout the recordings, you hear the crowd noise: glasses tinkle and conversation goes on, a counterpoint of forty-year-old flirtation and talk. Orrin Keepnews said, "I remember listening to the tapes and saying, 'There's nothing bad here!' Normally, you can cut one or two things right away, and there was nothing bad."

Two weeks later, on July 6, 1961, Scott LaFaro was driving up Route 20, a back road in those days, to his parents' place in Geneva, upstate. The car skidded and hit a tree, and he was killed instantly. "I was sleeping and the phone rang, and it was Bill," Paul Motian recalled. "He said, 'Scott's dead,' and I said, 'Yeah,' and I went back to sleep. And the next morning I said to my wife, 'Man, I had the weirdest dream last night. I dreamed that Bill called me and said that Scott had been killed!' So I called Bill right away at that apartment over on West Eighty-something to tell him about the dream."

After Scott LaFaro's death, Bill Evans became numb with grief; it took him months to recover, and there are people who think that he never did recover. Paul Motian: "Bill was in a state of shock. Look at my gig book: nothing, nothing, nothing with Bill, until December. Bill was like a ghost."

"All jazz records," Orrin Keepnews said, "have two lives, one in their time and another twenty-two years later. What no one could have imagined was that the second life would be so large."

Why *has* that afternoon lasted so long? "You know what I like best on that record?" Paul Motian asked. "The sounds of all those people, glasses and chatter—I mean, I know you're supposed to be very offended and all, but I like it. They're just there and all." Perhaps that's it, or part of it. Though we're instructed to search for "timelessness" in art, it is life that is truly timeless, the same staggeringly similar run of needs and demands and addictions, again and again, which blend one year into the next and one day into another and February's gig in Detroit into March's in Toronto. It is art that puts a time in place. Art is the part of culture that depends most entirely on time, on knowing exactly when. The emotions it summons belong to the room they were made in, and the city outside the room when they were made. Not a timeless experience of a general emotion but a permanent experience of a particular moment—that is what we want from jazz records and Italian landscapes alike. The gift the record gives us is a reminder that the big sludgy river of time exists first as moments. It gives us back our afternoons.

One of the mysteries of Evans's career is that, after that Sunday, he continued to play "Porgy" over and over again, almost obsessively—but almost always as a solo number. Paul Motian gave this some thought. "I don't think there was any reason—no, wait, I remember something now. While we were listening to that number on the tape, Bill was a wreck, and he kept saying something like 'Listen to Scott's bass, it's like an organ! It sounds so big, it's not real, it's like an organ, I'll never hear that again.' Could that, his always playing it without a bass afterwards, have been a sort of tribute to Scott? I kind of doubt it, but then again maybe so." When we hear Evans play "Porgy," we are hearing what a good Zen man like Evans would have wanted us to hear, and that is the sound of one hand clapping after the other hand is gone. ♦

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SHARKS

BY BRUCE McCALL

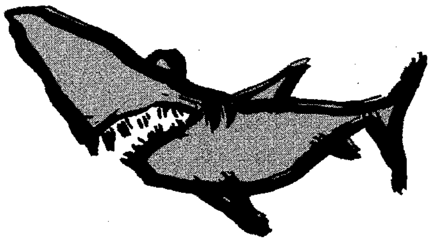
Sharks have astonishing sensory gifts but virtually no sense of occasion. Incidents of sharks crashing dinner parties have been reported from as far away as Madagascar and as close as Malibu. If you find a hammerhead or a great white horning in on one of your intimate gatherings, stay cool and collected. Do not wave your arms about or slap at it with a napkin. Keep the conversation going as if everything were normal. Blow out all candles, slowly ease up out of your chair, and go for the light switch, turning it off. Then wait at least fifteen minutes. Sharks thrive on visual stimulation, and they have very short attention spans; the finned interloper will probably get restless and bored, and leave of his own accord.

Being caught unawares by a shark while you're setting up a tee shot is not only exasperating; it can also be costly. (Remember the amateur video of a leopard shark gobbling up a Callaway driver that was played over and over last summer on the TV news?) It may be counter-intuitive, but if you see or even sense a shark on the tee, heave your golf bag as far as you can and run in counterclockwise circles. This will confuse the shark, whose sensory orientation is clockwise only, and it could help you avoid a nasty nip.

Sharks are also dyslexic. Knowing this could defuse the situation if you ever find yourself face to face with one of these undersea killing machines in a public library or a Christian Science reading room. The shark will probably start nosing the book, magazine, or newspaper you're reading with repeated sharp jabs, trying to knock it out of your hands. Resisting will only enrage the beast; let it go. In the same motion, pick up a dictionary—or, better yet, an encyclopedia—and flash some pages directly in front of his eyes. Sharks are almost all instinct and no brain to start with, but when you add in the dyslexia this method will almost surely induce a trance state in the big guy, allowing you to make a safe getaway.

Are you really certain that's a shark in your bathtub? Dolphins and tuna also go for warm water, and hasty misidentification has caused many a panicked home bather to sheepishly call back the local Coast Guard to admit a false alarm. Rule of thumb: if it's thrashing, it's a shark. Petting it, or feeding it a bath toy or a sponge, will buy you at best ten seconds, so get out of the tub immediately. Now, here's where some of those old wives' tales about sharks come in handy. It *is* true that sharks hate soapy water, and the feeling of being towelled off *does* irritate the sensitive nerve endings in their skin. So, while you're waiting for emergency help to come, toss as many bars of soap into the tub as you can while briskly rubbing around the beast's gill area with a fluffy bath towel. Chances are that Jaws will beat a hasty retreat.

An Australian couple who discovered that a shark had invited itself into the back seat of their car did exactly the wrong thing. They started driving at high speed and violently lurching from side to side, in an attempt to induce car sickness in their unwanted guest. This was a vain and unwise thing to do—sharks are immune to motion sickness. A shark in your car need not be fatal, though, if you follow a few simple directions: turn the radio up as loud as it will go and start singing at the top



of your lungs. Forget that you look, feel, and sound foolish. Keep it up, and you'll soon overburden the shark's ultra-sensitive sonar hearing system and bring on a thumping migraine painful enough to take the starch out of a great white. He'll soon close his eyes and probably slump down in his seat. That's your cue to gently bring the car to a stop—remembering to roll up all windows as you do so—and vamoose.

It's a common myth that sharks fear nothing. In fact, they are terrified by any number of things. One is cats. Another is heights. Signalled by some primitive instinct that he is literally out of his element, the shark finding himself in an up elevator or on a penthouse terrace will lose all his fight. Remembering this will comfort you should you suddenly notice a shark sitting next to you on an airplane. You'll probably even start to feel sorry for the poor limp creature groaning there beside you, oblivious of the food cart, of the in-flight movie, of you—of everything but his own misery.

These tips can help mightily to even up the contest between man and shark, but they do not work in every instance. Nobody has ever mounted a successful defense against a shark-in-a-bed situation. Ditto for those caught with open cans of ham while picnicking. Yet, in all fairness, there is an upside to shark encounters. For example, did you know that there's never been a single documented case of a shark attacking a Girl Scout troop without provocation? Or that you can set your clock by the sharks that show up for a burial at sea—and no, not just for the eats? (Mariners as far back as the fifteenth century knew that a shark will never bite an iron lung, a wheelchair, or any prosthetic device.) So be afraid. Be very afraid. Just don't give in to hysteria; that's exactly what they want you to do. ♦

From the Lexington (Mass.) Belmont Citizen-Herald.

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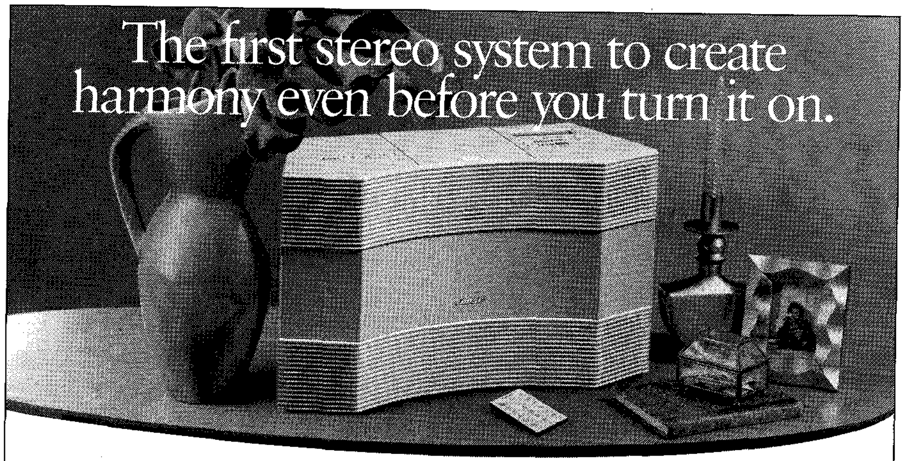
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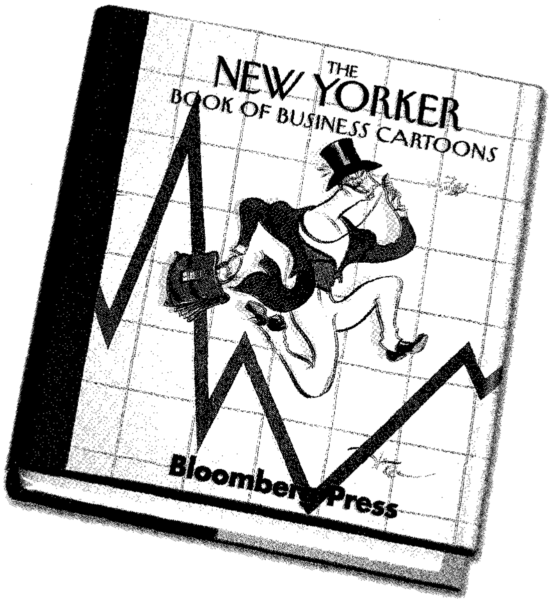

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ANNALS OF MEDICINE

AS GOOD AS DEAD

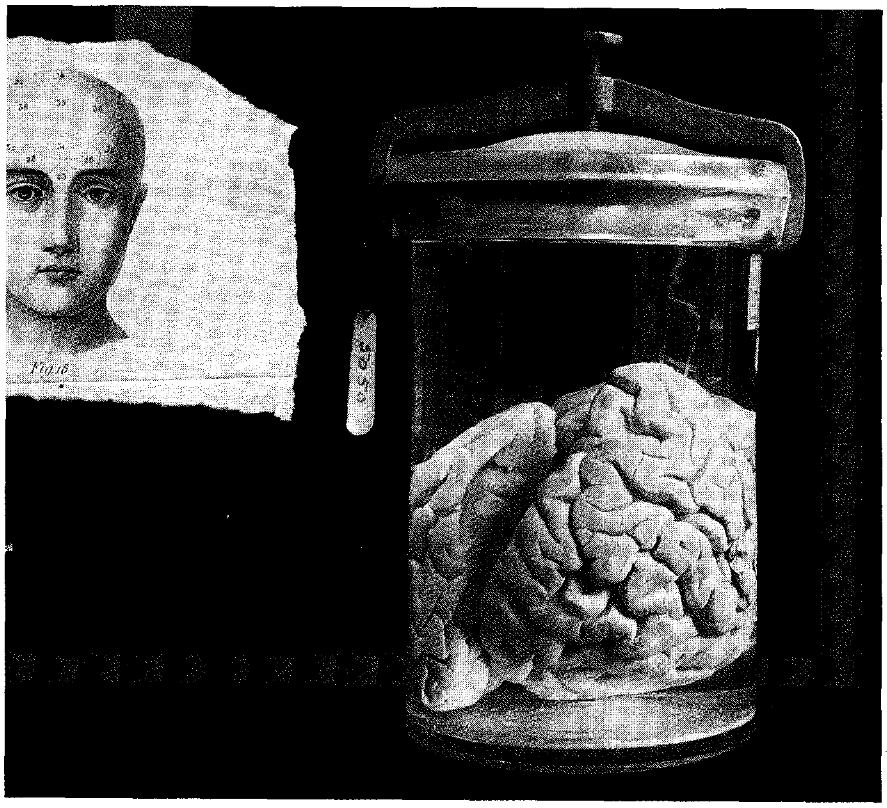
Is there really such a thing as brain death?

BY GARY GREENBERG

Just after a fourteen-year-old boy named Nicholas Breach learned that a tumor on his brain stem would be fatal, he told his parents, Rick and Kim Breach, that he wanted to be an organ donor. They respected his decision, and so did the boy's medical team at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Bernadette Foley, Nick's social worker there, said that the decision reflected a "maturity and sensitivity" and a wish to help others—something Nick had shown throughout his eight-year battle with recurrent tumors. "I've never been to a meeting like this one," Foley said. "The peace that came over the family and Nick was remarkable, and once it was out that this was the end, and the decision was made about organ donation, Nick said he was happy. They all seemed to be happy." The decision was redemptive, she said. "In a way, it gave some meaning to his life."

By the time I met Nick, he was confined to a hospital bed that had been set up in the living room of the Breaches' house, a brick bungalow outside Harrisburg. It was difficult for him to speak, and we chatted only briefly—about his dog, Sarah; his brother, Nathan; and his hope that his heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, and pancreas might enable other people to live—and then he dozed off.

As Nick slept, his parents told me that, amid their other worries, they had run into unexpected problems with the donation. Nick had wanted to die at home, with only palliative care, but organ donation is a high-tech affair. In most cases, the donor is someone with brain damage so severe that he requires a respirator to breathe, even though his heart continues to work on its own. A neurologist determines that the patient's brain has been irreversibly and totally destroyed, and on this basis pronounces him dead. This condition is known as brain death. If the patient's family has consented to donation, he is left on the respirator, which, along with his still-beating heart, keeps his organs viable for transplant until they can be harvested. The Breaches accepted that Nick would now have to be hospitalized at the very end, but their insurance company balked at the change in plan—and the added expense—reminding them that they had already elected basic hospice care. Only after the family's state legislator and the regional organ-procurement organization got involved did the insurance company agree to pay. A plan was devised to keep Nick at home until the last possible moment and then to transport him to a hospital, where an informal protocol had been set up to help him become an organ donor.



Some physicians worry that questioning brain death may discourage organ donors.

Even with the logistical and financial arrangements in place, there was no guarantee that Nick would meet the criteria for brain death. Because the tumor was on his brain stem, which controls core physiological processes like breathing and body temperature, it was very likely that Nick's higher brain—the thinking part—would remain active until he died from respiratory or organ failure. (His oncologist told me, "In his condition, what happens is the body goes. He's a consciousness trapped inside.") This would probably rule him out as a donor.

When I spoke to Nick's parents, they still had trouble with the notion that, to become a donor, it was not enough for their son to die with his body more or less intact. He would have to have the right kind of death, with the systems in his body shutting down in a particular order. "I'm so confused about this part of it," his mother said. "I don't understand why, if his heart stops beating, they can't put him back on a respirator." Rick, too, was confused about the moment at which "the plug will be pulled." In reality, there is no moment when the plug is pulled; to keep the organs viable, the respirator is left operating—and the heart keeps beating—until the surgeon removes the organs.

Confusion about the concept of brain death is not unusual, even among the transplant professionals, surgeons, neurologists, and bioethicists who grapple with it regularly. Brain death is confusing because it's an artificial distinction constructed, more than thirty years ago, on a conceptual foundation that is unsound. Recently, some physicians have begun to suggest that brain-dead patients aren't really dead at all—that the concept is just the medical profession's way of dodging ethical questions about a practice that saves more than fifteen thousand lives a year.

From the beginning, transplant practice has been governed by a simple, unwritten rule: no matter how extreme the circumstances, no matter how ill or injured the potential donor, he must die of some other cause before his vital organs can be removed; it would never be acceptable to kill someone for his organs. But, ideally, a donor would be alive at the time his organs were harvested, because as soon as the flow of oxygenated blood stops, a process called warm ischemia quickly begins to ruin them. By the nineteen-sixties, as doctors began to perfect techniques for transplanting livers and hearts, the medical establishment faced a paradox: the need for both a living body and a dead donor.

The profession was also struggling with questions posed by another new technology: respirators. These machines had become a fixture in hospitals in the nineteen-fifties, and at first their main purpose was to help children with polio breathe until they regained their strength. Doctors began to use them for patients with devastating brain injuries—the kind brought on by severe trauma or loss of oxygen as a result of stroke or cardiac arrest. Some of these people recovered sufficiently to be removed from the machines, but others lingered, unable to breathe on their own, inert and unresponsive even to the most noxious stimulus, and without any detectable electrical brain activity, until their hearts gave out—often a matter of hours, but sometimes of days or even weeks.

Physicians wondered what to do with these patients, whether removing the machines would be murder or mercy killing or simply a matter of letting nature take its course. At the same time, some noticed that the patients were perfect sources of viable organs for transplant, at least as long as their hearts kept beating. And then, in 1967, a Harvard anesthesiologist named Henry K. Beecher asked the dean of the medical school to form a committee to explore the issues of artificial life support and organ donation, which he believed were related. The Harvard committee, which Beecher chaired, included ten physicians, a lawyer, and a historian, and its report was published the following year in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. "Responsible medical opinion," it announced, "is ready to adopt new criteria for pronouncing death to have occurred in an individual sustaining irreversible coma as a result of permanent brain damage." Heartbeat or no, the committee declared, patients whose brains no longer functioned and who had no prospect of recovering were not lingering but were already dead—brain dead.

This physician-assisted redefinition of death meant that removing life-support machinery from these patients was no longer ethically suspect. And, by creating a class of dead people whose hearts were still beating, the Harvard committee gave transplant surgeons a new potential supply of organs. In the nineteen-seventies, however, only twenty-seven states adopted brain death as a legal definition of death. Theoretically, this meant that someone who had been declared dead in North Carolina could be resurrected by transferring him to a hospital in South Carolina. Practically, it meant that a doctor procuring organs from a brain-dead person was not equally protected in all jurisdictions from the charge that he was killing his patient.

In 1980, a commission appointed by President Carter began to look at medical ethical questions, which included finding a definition of death that could serve as a model for state laws. The commission recommended that doctors be given the power to declare people dead based on the neurological criteria suggested by the Harvard committee. Eventually, this recommendation was accepted in all fifty states.

The commission also wanted to convince the public that brain death was not just a legal fiction but the description of a biological truth. Two rationales were considered. In one, called the "higher-brain" formulation, a brain-dead person is alleged to be dead because his neocortex, the seat of consciousness, has been destroyed. He has thus lost the ability to

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think and feel—the capacity for personhood—that makes us who we are, and our lives worth living. But such "quality of life" criteria, the commission noted, raised uncomfortable ethical and political questions about the treatment of senile patients and how society valued the lives of the mentally impaired.

Instead, the commission chose to rely on what it called the "whole-brain" formulation. The brain, it was argued, directed and gave order and purpose to the different mechanical functions of our bodies. If both the neocortex and the brain stem (which regulates core physiological processes, such as breathing) stopped working, a person could be pronounced dead—not just because consciousness has disappeared but because, without the brain, nothing connects: there is no internal harmony, and the body no longer exists as an integrated whole.

When Nick Breach decided to become a donor, one of his first questions was whether he would be dead when his organs were taken. His parents told him that he would be, and, in a way, they saw this as one of the few things they could be sure about. Rick and Kim were more troubled by their son's next concern, that he might be taken from them prematurely. They began a vigil that took on a strange dual nature: keeping Nick company, making him comfortable, spending as much time as possible with him, and, at the same time, monitoring him for the signs—whatever they might be—that death had come so close that it was time to get him to the hospital so that he could become an organ donor.

The organ-procurement agency that worked with the Breaches during those months was called Gift of Life. In 2000, Gift of Life, which is based in Philadelphia and has a staff of a hundred, helped manage more than eight hundred organ donations at a hundred and sixty-two member hospitals in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware—five per cent of the total organs removed in the country.

The agency's mission is to "positively predispose all members of the community to organ and tissue donation so that donation is viewed as a fundamental human responsibility." Public-service ads, a pamphlet featuring Michael Jordan, and bumper stickers that say "Don't take your organs to Heaven—Heaven knows we need them here" are all promoting an attitude about how, as Howard M. Nathan, the bearded, energetic forty-seven-year-old who heads Gift of Life, put it, "society should feel about this subject." Because of the drama and human interest of Nick Breach's case, the agency was naturally eager to publicize it: "Here's a young man who is awake and aware, contemplating his death, and he becomes a donor," Kevin Sparkman, the agency's director of community relations, explained. "What a great example of what we want families to do!"

When a person is identified as a potential organ donor—generally, when he is about to be pronounced brain dead—Gift of Life dispatches a transplant coördinator to the hospital to try to obtain the family's consent. (An organ-donor card is merely an indication of a patient's wishes; the family has the final word.) "The first thing we do is insure that the family understands and acknowledges that their loved one is dead," Linda Herzog, a senior hospital-services coördinator, told me.

Consent rates are tied directly to knowledge of brain death: families who think that donation is actually going to kill the patient refuse more often than families who believe that their relative is already dead. This is not as straightforward as it may seem, largely because of the lifelike appearance of the brain dead, whose skin is still warm to the touch and who are known within the industry as "heart-beating cadavers." Gift of Life has developed a program that trains hospital staffs to explain the phenomenon to families. I watched in a darkened conference room as Herzog reviewed the program for two transplant coördinators, who were scheduled to present it later that afternoon in a Philadelphia hospital.

Using slides, Herzog ran through the process by which brain death is established. A neurologist performs a series of tests at the bedside—checking for such things as pupillary reflexes, response to pain, and the ability to breathe spontaneously. (If the patient is entirely unresponsive during two such examinations, the doctor concludes that his whole brain—cortex and brain stem—has been destroyed.) This is not a terribly sophisticated procedure, but it's far more complicated than, say, ascertaining that a person has no pulse, and far less self-evident. Even when the tests are conducted or reënacted in front of family members, they often rely on their intuitions and insist that the patient is still alive. This failure to accept the truth is a function of denial, Herzog said, and she went on to note, with some dismay, that even highly trained professionals who fully accept the concept sometimes talk to brain-dead patients.

"It took us years to get the public to understand what brain death was," Nathan said. "We had to train people in how to talk about it. Not that they're brain dead, but they're dead: 'What you see is the machine artificially keeping the body alive . . .' " He stopped and pointed to my notebook. "No, don't even use that. Say 'keeping the organs functioning.' "

Virtually every expert I spoke with about brain death was tripped up by its semantic trickiness. "Even I get this wrong," said one physician and bioethicist who has written extensively on the subject, after making a similar slip. Stuart Youngner, the director of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at Case Western Reserve University, thinks that the need for linguistic vigilance indicates a problem with the concept itself. "The organ-procurement people and transplant activists say you've got to stop saying things like that because that promulgates the idea that the patients are not really dead. The language is a symptom not of stupidity but of how people experience these 'dead' people—as not exactly dead."

Last year, I went to Havana for the Third International Symposium on Coma and Death, a conference held every four years and attended primarily by neurologists and bioethicists, joined by lawyers, anthropologists, and members of the clergy. At one session, I watched as a videotape of a recumbent adolescent boy, his feet toward the camera, his legs bowed, almost froglike, played on a television monitor in a corner of the room. He wore shorts, and there were two tubes entering his body, one in his abdomen, the other in his throat. The boy's chest rose and fell to the whir and click of the respirator, but otherwise he was perfectly still.

On the tape, a trim, balding man named Alan Shewmon, a pediatric neurologist at U.C.L.A., stood near the bed and conducted a medical examination. He looked into the boy's eyes, shook maracas next to his head, inserted a swab in a nostril, dropped cold water into the ears and lemon on the tongue, pinched and palpated and inspected. None of these actions drew a response from the boy, whom I will call Matthew.

"So how does New York stack up against Uzbekistan?"

Shewmon was also standing next to the monitor in Havana, offering additional commentary. He has been thinking about death for most of his career. A practicing Catholic, he has made contesting the concept of brain death a specialty, and has served on a Pontifical Academy of Sciences task force on the subject. Shewmon's inquiry has led him from the higher-brain rationale through the whole-brain rationale to his current position: a strong conviction that brain death, while a severe disability, even severe enough to warrant discontinuing life support, is not truly death.

Although Matthew didn't seem dead, it was hard to think of him as alive. On the monitor, a nurse removed the upper tube, suctioned the small hole in the boy's throat, noted that he did not cough, and continued the routine of the exam. Then something different happened: some ice water trickled onto the boy's shoulder, and it twitched. And though the screen was too small to see this, Shewmon told us that Matthew sprouted goose bumps, that his flesh was mottling and flushing with the stress of the exam. He was showing signs, that is, of precisely the kind of systemic functioning that the brain dead would generally be expected to lack.

In the video, Shewmon lifted Matthew's arm by the wrist, and the hand sprang to life with a small spasm. A woman's voice—Matthew's mother, we learned—said, "When he knows what you're going to do, he stops that." Shewmon described what was going on in medical terms—clonus, an involuntary contraction and release of nerves. He was making his main point: that this boy—who at age four was struck with meningitis that swelled his brain and split his skull, who would probably have been pronounced brain dead had he not been too young under the statutes of the time, whose mother refused to discontinue life support and ultimately took her son home on a ventilator and a feeding tube, who had persisted in this twilight condition for thirteen years, healing from wounds and illness, growing—was alive. Not by virtue of intention or will, as his mother has implied, but because he had maintained a somatic integrated unity—the internal harmony, and the overarching coördination of his body's functions—which, if the whole-brain rationale is correct, he simply should not have been able to do.

After the presentation ended, I spoke to Ronald Cranford, a professor of neurology and bioethics at the University of Minnesota, who is one of Shewmon's critics. He argued that Matthew's case was only an unusually prolonged example of the normal course brain death takes. "Any patient you keep alive, or dead, longer than a few days will develop spinal-cord reflexes," he said, recalling a case in which the doctor said, "Yes, she's been getting better ever since she died."

In a question-and-answer session with Shewmon the next day, after an address in which he drew parallels between the brain dead and people who are conscious but have been paralyzed by injuries to the upper spinal cord, no one really took issue with his science. At the same time, none of the physicians would accept what Shewmon was really saying: that the brain dead are not dead. "The main philosophical question is, Is this a body or is this a person?" said Calixto Machado, the Cuban neurologist who organized the symposium. Fred Plum, the chairman emeritus of the Department of Neurology at Cornell University's Weill Medical College, had positioned himself directly in front of the podium for the talk, and shot his hand in the air as soon as Shewmon was finished. "This is anti-Darwinism," Plum said. "The brain is the person, the evolved person, not the machine person. Consciousness is the ultimate. We are not one living cell. We are the evolution of a very large group of systems into the awareness of self and the environment, and that is the production of the civilization in which any of us lives."

Shewmon had laid a trap for his audience, he later told me. He had hoped to break down the pretense that anyone subscribed to the whole-brain rationale. He wanted to show that the higher-brain rationale, which holds that living without consciousness is not really living—and which the President's commission rejected because it raised questions about quality of life which science can never settle—was the sub-rosa justification for deciding to call a brain-dead person dead. He wanted to make it clear that these doctors were not making a straightforward medical judgment but, rather, a moral judgment that people like Matthew were so devastated that they had lost their claim on existence. And, at least in his own view, the comments he'd provoked meant that he had succeeded.

The neurologist James Bernat, a professor at Dartmouth Medical School and the author of the chapters on brain death in several neurology textbooks, is one of the defenders of the whole-brain concept. Like Shewmon, Bernat served on the Pontifical Academy of Sciences task force. And, last August, his position appeared to prevail when Pope John Paul II, speaking before an international transplantation congress, said that "the complete and irreversible cessation of all brain activity, if rigorously applied," along with the family's consent, gave a "moral right" to remove organs for transplant—thus resolving an ambiguity in the Church as to whether Catholics should become donors. (Orthodox Jewish and other theologians continue to debate whether a brain-dead person is truly dead.) But even Bernat sees the problem he's up against. "Brain death was accepted before it was conceptually sound," he told me on the telephone from his office in New Hampshire. He readily admits that no one has yet explained scientifically why the destruction of the brain is the death of the person, rather than an extreme injury. "I'm being driven by an intuition that the brain-centered concept of death is sound," he said. "Death is a biological function. Death is an event."

Stuart Youngner, of Case Western, however, rails against what he sees as bad faith in the way brain death came to be defined. Youngner, a white-bearded, avuncular fifty-six-year-old, calls the Harvard committee's work "conceptual gerrymandering," a redrawing of the line between life and death which was determined by something other than science. "What if the Harvard committee, instead of saying, 'Let's call them dead,' had said, 'Let's have a discussion in our society about whether there are circumstances in which people's organs can be taken without sacrificing freedom, without harming people.' Would it be better?"

The problem, as Youngner sees it, is that the veneer of scientific truth attached to the concept of brain death conceals the fact that the lives of brain-dead people have ended only by virtue of what amounts to a social agreement. According to Youngner, this means that the brain dead are really just "as good as dead," but, he is quick to add, this doesn't mean that they shouldn't be organ donors. Instead, he suggests that "as good as dead" be recognized as a special status, one that many people, brain dead or not, may achieve at the end of life. "I'm willing to point out the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the notion, and I actually think that acknowledging them may in the long run be better," he told me.

During the last decade, Youngner and other doctors and ethicists have developed protocols to allow critically ill or injured people who have no hope of recovery, but who are unlikely to become brain dead, to donate their organs after they have been declared dead by the traditional cardiopulmonary criteria. This procedure, which is known as non-heart-beating-cadaver donation and requires extremely rapid intervention and newly developed techniques, may make it possible to salvage viable organs in a wider range of cases.

As it happened, Nick Breach was a candidate for this procedure. If he was brought to the hospital, placed on a respirator, and then languished, without ever meeting the criteria for brain death—a likely scenario, given the course of his disease—only a tight orchestration of his death could conceivably give him a chance of becoming a donor. According to Gift of Life's protocol, Nick's parents would first have to decide to remove life support. Nick would then be taken to an operating room, where he would be taken off the ventilator, and the doctors would wait for his heart to stop. If that took more than an hour, warm ischemia would set in (as his breathing would be too compromised to supply oxygen to his organs), the donation would be aborted, and Nick would be returned to a hospital room to die. But if cardiac arrest came in time, a five-minute count would begin, at the end of which Nick would be declared dead. A transplant team standing by in an anteroom would immediately harvest his organs and rush them to their recipients. (Even with this alternative, the window for success was fairly narrow. "All we're trying to do," Howard Nathan acknowledged, "is give it a shot.")

Non-heart-beating protocols have the potential to increase donation by as much as twenty-five per cent. But, as Youngner points out, the five-minute waiting period (it ranges from two minutes in some protocols to ten minutes in others) is really just a decent interval, a more or less arbitrary marker of the passage from life to death, whose significance is far more symbolic than scientific.

Robert Truog, a professor of medical ethics and anesthesiology at Harvard Medical School, is even more critical of the protocol. "Non-heart-beating protocols are a dance we do so that people can comply with the dead-donor rule," he told me. "It seems silly that we hang on to this façade. It's a bizarre way of practice, to be unwilling to say what you are doing"—that is, identifying a person as an organ donor when he is still alive and then declaring him dead by a process tailored to keep up appearances and which, in the bargain, might not best meet the requirements of transplant. In Truog's view, a better approach would be to remove these patients' organs while they are still on life support, as is done with brain-dead donors. "If they have detectable brain activity, then they should be given anesthetic," he said, but there is no reason to continue to conceal what is happening by waiting for their hearts to stop beating.

Abandoning the dead-donor convention—which is an inevitable consequence of Youngner's and Truog's positions—may, however, cause other problems. It awakens the same sort of fears that Nick Breach himself had about the premature removal of his organs. It raises vexing legal questions, because, as Truog bluntly told me, without the rule “taking organs is a form of killing”—killing that he thinks is justified, and that Youngner and others would argue is already happening. He added that repealing the rule risks “making physicians seem like a bunch of vultures.”

In return, Truog points out, patients would gain more control over the end of their lives: they would no longer have to wait until they crossed over that gerrymandered border and, instead, could specify at what point they would like to be declared dead so that they could donate their organs. This, however, might not be adequate consolation for those who fear that the need for organs might create a perverse incentive for doctors to give up on them, after weighing their lives against those of others who may be more worthy or less damaged. Youngner expressed reservations about how his position would sound to other doctors and, most important, to potential donors. “I think that stridently advocating the abandonment of the dead-donor rule would be a mistake,” he said. He worried, he told me, that religious conservatives and others might “seize on it as a violation of the right to life,” thus turning transplant into another medical practice—like abortion or fetal stem-cell research—that’s bogged down in intractable political wrangling.

As Nick Breach thought about his death, he made some additional last wishes that were easier to satisfy than his desire to become a donor: Ronald McDonald came to visit; so did Weird Al Yankóvic, one of Nick’s idols. When Yankovic pulled up to the Breaches’ house in a bus, the neighbors moved their cars to accommodate him. Yankovic came inside and sat for a while with Nick, who was bedridden by then. Nick told him, “I really love all your CDs, Weird Al.”

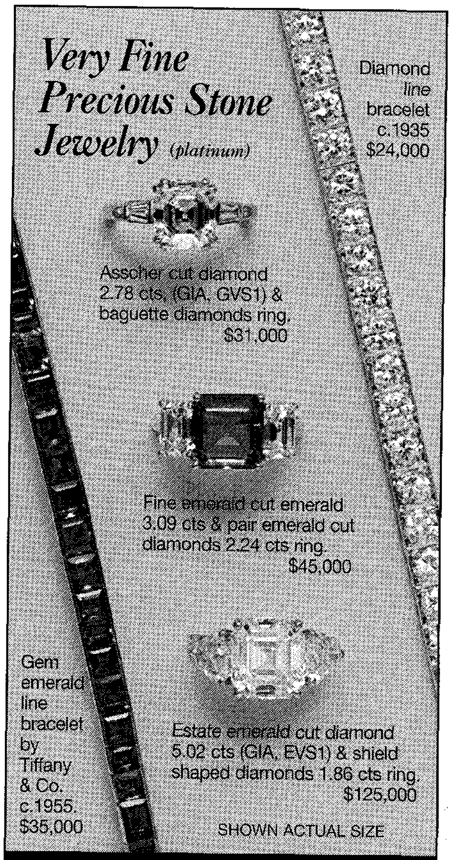
Six days later, at 11:45 P.M., Nick stopped breathing. Rick, who was taking his turn by the bedside, summoned Kim, who called an ambulance and began to administer CPR. The plan was to revive Nick so that he could be brought to a hospital and placed on a ventilator. But his mother’s efforts, and those of the paramedics in the ambulance and the staff in the emergency room, failed. Nick’s heart had stopped too soon, and ischemia had set in. In the end, the only organs he was able to donate were his eyes.

It is tempting to wish that death weren’t so complicated. Had Nick and his parents realized how alive he still needed to be in order to donate his vital organs successfully, they could have been given an honest choice between having Nick remain at home until the end and giving up on his goal of becoming a donor, and going to the hospital much earlier and staying until he could be declared “as good as dead.”

Over and over again at the conference in Havana, I heard ambivalence and anxiety about “the public” knowing what doctors already know. “These things ought to be worked out in the medical profession, to some extent, before you go to the public,” Shewmon told me. “Because if you go public right away, it could just put the kibosh on the whole thing, because people get hysterical and misunderstand things.” He paused and looked at me. “These are complex issues. You can’t expect the public to understand these things in sound bites, which is what they usually get. So I’m reluctant to talk to reporters about this stuff.”

During a break between sessions, I got into a conversation with a philosopher. He told me that he had been talking about this subject with a colleague, and that they’d found themselves calling brain death a “noble lie.” Later, as the conference reconvened, I asked him if we could talk some more about that idea. He was visibly upset. “Listen, I’m not sure about that comment,” he said. “It’s inflammatory. It’s too strong.” Among his concerns, he explained, was the possibility that his words might discourage people from becoming organ donors.

It may be too much to say that the concept of brain death is an outright lie, but it is certainly less than the truth. Like many of technology’s sublime achievements, organ transplant, for all its promise, also has an unavoidable aspect of horror—the horror of rendering a human being into raw materials, of turning death into life, of harvesting organs from an undead boy. Should a practice, however noble, be able to hold truth hostage? Perhaps the medical profession should embrace the obvious: to be an organ donor is to choose a particular way to finish our dying, at the hands of a surgeon, after some uncertain border has been crossed—a line that will change with time and circumstance, and one that science will never be able to draw with precision. ♦



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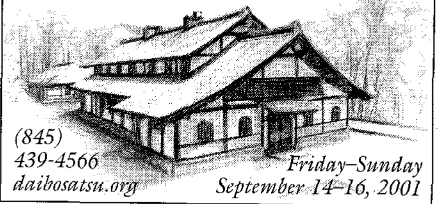

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THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Jack Valenti has fought Hollywood's battles in Washington for thirty-five years. Can he still get his way?

BY CONNIE BRUCK

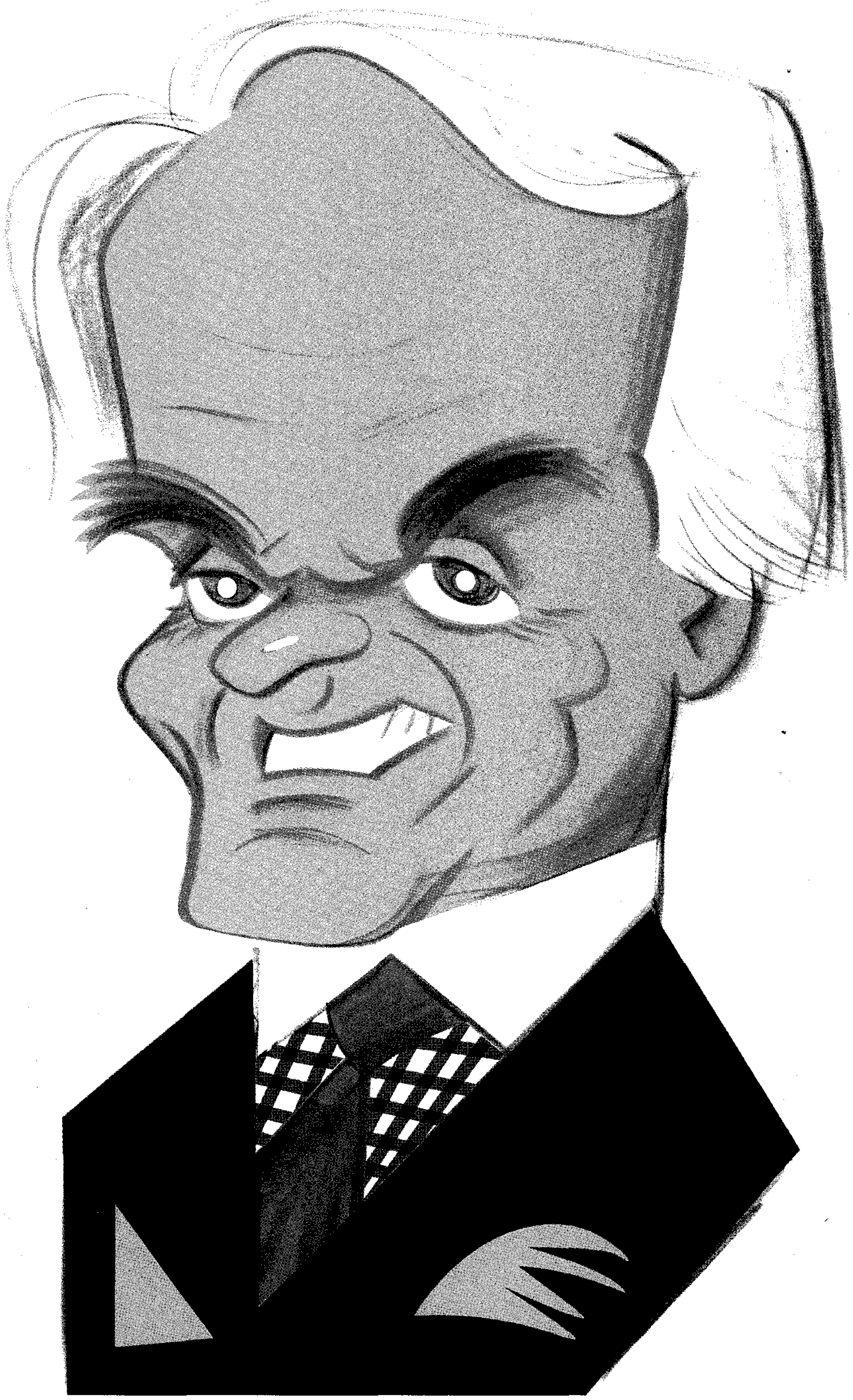
On a Friday morning in late March, the start of Academy Awards weekend in Los Angeles, Jack Valenti—dapper as always, his skin tanned, his white hair carefully coiffed, his demeanor relentlessly upbeat—was seated at a prominent table in the dining room of the Peninsula Hotel, greeting the famous, and talking about fame. His fame, in fact. "People stop me in airports all the time. 'You're Jack Valenti! You're in the movie business!' That's all they know. And I say, 'How do you know who I am?' Well, they say they've seen me on TV"—he mentioned various news programs and shows—"but most of all it's the Academy Awards. I was in Beijing not long ago, and I walked into the office of the Minister of Culture of China. 'Mr. Valenti! I see you on the Academy Awards!' " Valenti mimicked the Chinese official's diction. Then, with the kind of verbal ostentation that is his trademark, he concluded, "It *heralds* you, and it gives you a pass to get in that door."

Valenti made his début as a presenter on the Academy Awards show in 1967, a year after he became president of the Motion Picture Association of America, a trade association comprising the seven major studios. He has appeared on most of the Oscar presentations since then. However, there was a period in the early nineties when Valenti was absent; Gregory Peck, a member of the board of governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, argued against including Valenti, and protested, "This is the Academy, not the M.P.A.A." It is a distinction that has become slightly blurred under Valenti's aegis. The M.P.A.A. embraces the biggest producers in the world of movies, television, and home video; Valenti is employed by the studio heads as their lobbyist. But such an unvarnished description does not do justice to the mystique of the M.P.A.A., an aura that he has cultivated over the years. Valenti tends not to refer to himself as a lobbyist, and when he makes public pronouncements he frequently speaks in terms of principle (artistic freedom, the First Amendment) and the public good, rather than of the economic interests of his bosses. He has cast the cloak of the creative community around management's shoulders, and made himself a Hollywood celebrity in the process. (His old friend Kirk Douglas told me, "I kidded him, 'All of us actors are your friends, but you're on the other side! You're the enemy!' ") Valenti guards his prerogatives zealously. He was said to have been enraged at being excluded from the Academy Awards, and to have held it against Peck; but eventually he returned, as a presenter, and today he and Peck are friends.

Valenti has been in his M.P.A.A. post for so long that virtually everything he is grappling with today—copyright protection, trade issues, piracy, threats from Congress to find ways to regulate the movie industry—has a déjà-vu quality for him. Even the issues of intellectual property in cyberspace, raised in the recent Napster litigation, and echoed in a number of lawsuits brought by the M.P.A.A. against various online entities, are reminiscent of a long-past battle—that of the Hollywood studios against VCR movie recording, in the early eighties. (In that dispute, too, a new technology allowed users to appropriate Hollywood producers' property in a way that they saw as illegal; at the time, Valenti predicted that if VCR owners were allowed to tape movies it would mean the death of the movie industry.) Valenti has also seen Washington's threats of censorship erupt periodically over the years. Last September, after the Federal Trade Commission released a scathing report about excessive violence in movies, the Senate Commerce Committee held hearings in which legislators and witnesses excoriated the entertainment industry not only for marketing violent films to children but also for the level of violence and sex in its movies and records generally. In April, Senator Joseph Lieberman proposed legislation to police the marketing of violent films to children. Valenti, who received a tongue-lashing himself when he appeared before the committee, has dealt with this latest crisis with vintage political skills—calling on long-cultivated relationships in Congress, and taking care to praise his congressional adversaries. "I like Joe Lieberman. I like Sam Brownback. I like John Ashcroft," Valenti said. "I think they are doing what they do not for political reasons but because they believe in it. But I don't agree with them. I pay Joe Lieberman the highest compliment. I contribute to his campaigns—hard money, I might add."

As Valenti and I chatted, Michael Medavoy, the chairman of Phoenix Pictures, stopped by our table. He mentioned that Vicente Fox, the President of Mexico, had been his dinner guest the night before. Valenti quickly replied that he, too, had recently met Fox, and had been impressed. "He's six-four, charming, charismatic," Valenti said. "He draws you in with his aroma."

I couldn't help remarking that Valenti's comment was reminiscent of his response, a half century ago, to another political figure: Lyndon Baines Johnson. So much in Valenti's life goes back to Lyndon Johnson. Valenti was an advertising man in Houston when L.B.J. brought him to the White House as one of his special assistants, in November, 1963, and Valenti embarked on what he refers to as "the summertime of my life." ("I always tell young guys, enjoy this, because you will never have this exultation again.") Valenti is fond of saying that everything he knows about politics he learned from Lyndon Johnson. Valenti spent three years working with the President, and if it weren't for this stint he would not have been offered the



Valenti is "a true political operative," a former studio head said. "He understood better than anyone else the power of celebrity."

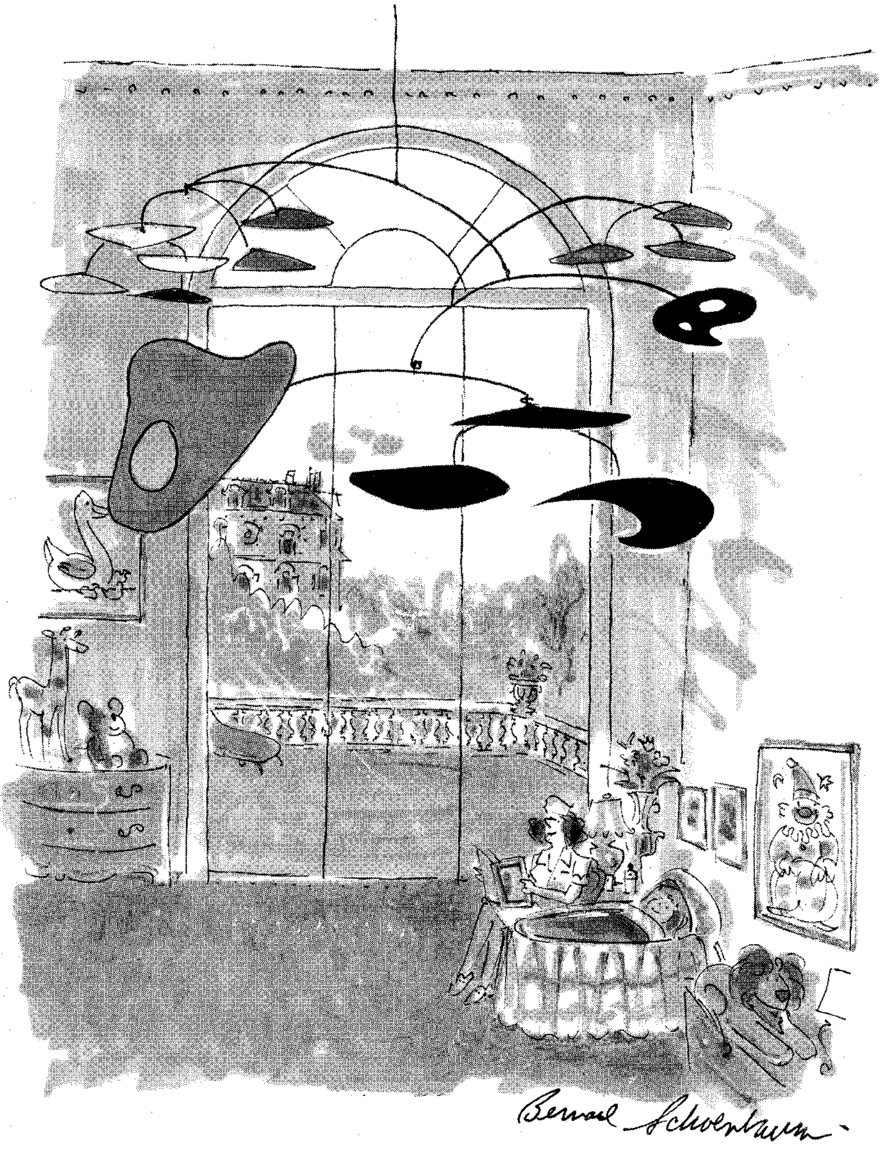
ROBERT RISKO

M.P.A.A. post; nor would he likely have had the political skills required to hold on to that job for thirty-five years.

Jack Valenti idolized Lyndon Johnson. The tenor of their relationship was set after their first meeting, in 1957. Johnson, then Senate Majority Leader, sought to constantly replenish his political contacts, by organizing meetings with promising young men in various Texas communities. Valenti stood out. The son of a county tax clerk, he had been an honor student at Houston's Sam Houston High School and, by his account, the city's youngest graduate, at fifteen. He had worked as an office boy at the Humble Oil & Refining Company while taking night classes at the University of Houston. During the Second World War, as a young pilot in the Army, he had flown fifty-one combat missions and received numerous medals. After earning a degree from Harvard Business School, he had returned to Humble as head of advertising, and, in 1952, he and a partner had founded their own advertising agency.

Valenti was invited to meet with Johnson at Houston's Shamrock Hilton Hotel, and, not long after, he offered his impressions of the Senator in a weekly column he wrote for the Houston *Post:* "He's a tall man, tall in the cord-lean frame of a man used to being fit. He is brown with the imprint of the Texas sun etched in his face and around his eyes. . . . There is a gentleness in his manner, but there is no disguising the taut, crackling energies that spill out of him even when he's standing still. And no mistaking either the feel of strength, unbending as a mountain crag, tough as a jungle fighter." Valenti later said that he received a letter from Johnson, "expressing delight" in the column. After that, Valenti attended Johnson functions in Texas, along with hundreds of others; but he had no further personal contact until Johnson became the Vice-Presidential nominee in the 1960 campaign, and asked Valenti to organize the advertising in Texas.

In the spring of 1961, Valenti began to date Johnson's personal secretary, a vivacious blond woman named Mary Margaret Wiley. Wiley, who grew up in Austin, had begun working for Johnson eight years earlier, after graduating from the University of Texas, and was a favorite of his—spending time at the Johnson ranch, and accompanying him on political trips. In the summer of 1962, at twenty-nine, she married Valenti, who was eleven years her senior. Her father was ill at the time, so Vice-President Johnson gave away the bride. Wiley quit her job but, as was often the case with people who left Johnson's orbit, kept being drawn back in; in the fall of 1962, she accompanied the Vice-President to Iran, Turkey, and Greece. And she and Valenti were frequent guests at the L.B.J. ranch.



It was not until November of 1963 that Johnson began to rely on Valenti. Valenti had organized a dinner in Houston, attended by President and Mrs. Kennedy and the Vice-President and his wife, Lady Bird; it had gone exceptionally well, and Johnson asked Valenti to accompany him to Dallas the next day and then continue with him to Austin, for another dinner that Valenti had orchestrated. Valenti, delighted, agreed. He was in the motorcade in Dallas the next day. He was among those who rushed to Parkland Hospital, where President Kennedy had been taken, and where he eventually learned that the President was dead and that Johnson wanted him on Air Force One. Valenti sped there (he appears in the famous photograph of Johnson taking the oath of office), and for the next couple of months lived with Johnson, first in the Elms, the Vice-President's residence, and then in the White House. Liz Carpenter, Lady Bird's press secretary, who was also on Air Force One that day, told me, "He scooped Jack up—that's so Johnsonian! Houston had been successful, so he scooped him up and took him along. Johnson was such an impromptu, impulsive, enthusiastic person—particularly when things had gone well. It just happened that way. Destiny. Jack was there, he was capable, he was a 'can-do man,' as Johnson liked to say."

Valenti had a signal attribute, Carpenter added, that Johnson valued. "The Johnson expression, which came from the frontier days, was that he wanted somebody he could 'go to the well with.' Well, Jack was certainly somebody he could go to the well with."

Valenti delivered his own self-assessment. In an undated note, apparently written after he had been with President Johnson for several weeks, Valenti wrote, "I bring you one asset: Loyalty."

During his Presidency, Johnson taped many of his phone conversations. In a number of calls with Valenti that took place in late 1963 and throughout 1964, Johnson displayed a range of moods, but Valenti was unvarying: always the booster, an eager acolyte, a sympathetic sounding board. Often in conversations with his assistants, Johnson would pause for extended periods—some, like Bill

Moyers and Walter Jenkins, would simply wait for the President to continue. But Valenti, seemingly unable to bear the silence, would jump in to fill it with some bit of information, usually gleaned from the media, or with praise. ("Incidentally, Mr. President, your decision on that Cuba thing I think was definitely the right one.") Johnson consumed those who worked for him, and perhaps no one resisted his demands less than Valenti. On Christmas Day, 1963, Johnson, at his ranch, reached Valenti, who was spending Christmas with Mary Margaret and their infant daughter, Courtenay Lynda, and family members in Houston.

"God, we miss you up here today," Johnson began.

"Well, sir, I'm going to be up there tomorrow."

"Tomorrow, but God, what about today?"

Valenti gave a weak chuckle. "Well, I thought you wanted to give me one day off, Mr. President."

"Well, I did. That was yesterday."

"Oh, my goodness, I had yesterday off, huh? Well, all right, I was going to get up there tomorrow, first thing, first time I could get a plane out of here."

"Well, I'll just send a plane for you—because I miss ya. And you gonna bring the baby with ya?"

"Well, I hadn't planned on bringing Mary Margaret and the baby with me."

"Oh well, hell, Mary Margaret's the real reason we want you to come, Jack. We can do without you."

"All right, sir, if you want me to bring Mary Margaret, I will, sir."

Johnson asked to speak to Valenti's mother, father, and sister in turn. "You sure did know how to raise him, Mr. Valenti," he said to Valenti's father. "You know, up in our country, they say there's a good deal in the old stud. . . . You know the way we buy the bulls? We buy 'em by the daddy!"

Whenever Johnson was feeling abused—by the press, or by another politician, or by an aide whom he suspected of being insufficiently loyal—he could rely on Valenti to share his indignation. In February, 1964, Johnson was complaining to Valenti that the Texas Governor John Connally was leaking stories to the press about a rift between himself and the President. "I don't understand it, Mr. President," Valenti responded. "John is simply the governor of Texas and you're the President of the United States, and there's a damn big difference in that. . . . If John doesn't watch out, he can be in real trouble down there, if he tries to denounce you down there."

A few moments later, Johnson said, "I think I can take every Mexican in the state and every nigger in the state."

"No question about it, no question about it!"

When Johnson was attacked, Valenti was transformed from genial cheerleader to rabid defender, with a taste for vitriol. The White House Festival of the Arts in June, 1965—an event that Valenti had helped organize—became, in considerable measure, a protest against the Vietnam War. Recalling the event years later, Valenti declared that the writer Dwight Macdonald, who was circulating a petition denouncing Johnson, "made an unmitigated ass of himself. I must say that I'd never met him before, and when I first met him the one thing I noticed about him was that he needed to gargle with Lavoris. When I later began to read more of his prose, I found it indistinguishable from his breath at the time."

If Valenti's devotion to Johnson seemed more familial than professional, in a way it was, because of Johnson's closeness to Mary Margaret Valenti. In an undated note to L.B.J., Valenti wrote, "Mr. President, MM and I are getting ready to go home now—we just wanted to say we love you very much." For his part, Johnson, in his banter, was always casting Valenti in the role of second fiddle—he was calling to speak to Mary Margaret, not Valenti, L.B.J. would say. In taped conversations with Mary Margaret, Johnson was characteristically overbearing and teasing. One evening in March of 1964, when Courtenay Lynda Valenti was about five months old, Johnson urged Mary Margaret to come to dinner at the White House. "Put that baby . . . just cover it up on the back of your back and walk down here and have dinner with us."

"I've already eaten, Mr. President, and she's already in bed, and just cryin', up there."

"Well, if she's awake, I'd like to see her."

"Well, sir—"

"Would you rather me come out there and you cook dinner for me?"

Mary Margaret laughed, and said, "Well, I'm afraid you wouldn't get very good service that way."

"Well, yes, I can get good service. But one way or the other, you either gotta come see me or I'll come see you."

The infant became almost as much the focus of Johnson's affection as her mother. "How's Miss Lynda?" Johnson inquired of Mary Margaret, in a conversation in February, 1964.

"She's just doin' fine."

"You don't still call her Courtenay, do ya?"

Mary Margaret laughed, and then responded, "Well, a little bit—"

"You do?"

More laughter. "But she's a fine girl."

"Well, you call her Lynda some?"

"Well, Jack does."

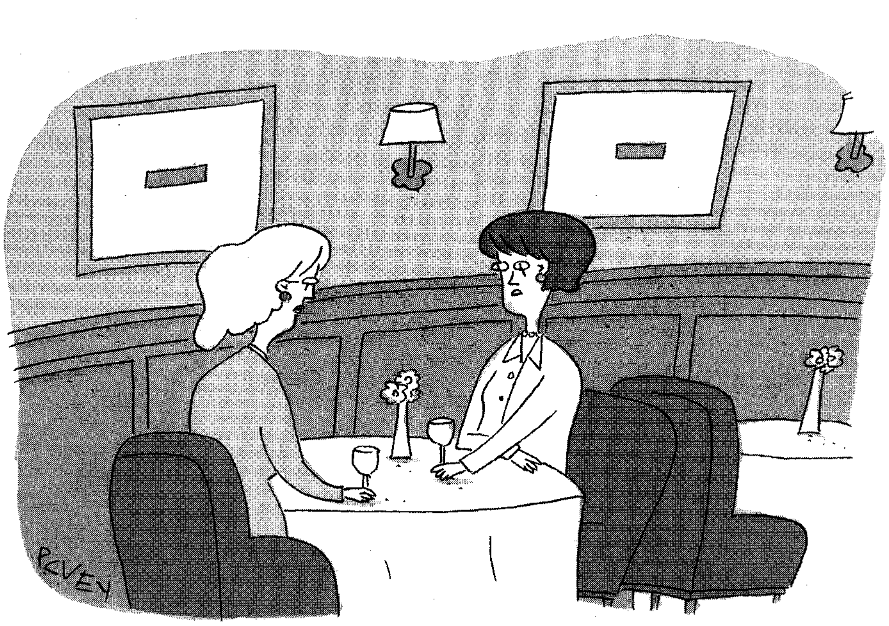
"Well, I say, what about you, though?"

Laughter. "Well, I just sort of got in the habit of Courtenay."

"Well, you better change, you better give me equal time, that's only fair. Don't you think it's fair that you give me part of the time?"

Courtenay became a frequent visitor to the White House, and by the time she was four months old she, too, was receiving calls from the President. In the card index of Johnson's daily diary, which reflects visits and phone conversations with the President, there are forty-four cards for Miss Courtenay Valenti.

It gradually became evident that Valenti, despite his self-deprecating appraisal, was bringing Johnson more than loyalty. The same qualities that had made him effective in the advertising world came into play here, as he supervised Johnson's calendar, coördinated speechwriting, and lobbied Capitol Hill. An inveterate, unabashed enthusiast about many people and subjects, he was an engaging, likable person. In the early days of the Johnson Administration, especially, when tensions were raw between the Kennedy and the Johnson staffs, Valenti tried, with limited success, to build a bridge between the two groups. If he seemed insecure, stressing his Harvard degree and reflexively reaching for ornate language, that was something he shared with many of his Texas compatriots. And Valenti applied himself to



"I feel I'm losing touch with the unrealistic view I have of him."

self-improvement with a fierce drive. "He undertook a reading course so varied and voluminous that his desk often resembled the check-out table at the Library of Congress," Hugh Sidey wrote about Valenti in *Life* in 1966. "He plunged into the works of Omar Khayyam, Walt Whitman, Edmund Burke, Will Durant, and Arnold Toynbee." And, like John Kennedy, he "had a reading rack rigged on his bathtub so that his eyes would not be idle when he was scrubbing himself."

Occasionally, Valenti's adman instincts seemed out of place; in April, 1965, he wrote a letter to the President, arguing that investigations of various newspaper chains by the Justice Department's antitrust division were ill-conceived, and were "systematically destroying newspapers' friendship with the President." More often than not, however, these instincts served him well. Valenti was not an original thinker, but he was great at translating abstractions into human terms. Lawrence Levinson, L.B.J.'s deputy counsel, recalled that if Valenti was handed a speech about an arcane subject he would often write an introduction and create a frame that made it more accessible. "The President would often say about some speech, 'I want it Valenti-ized! I want it made human!'"

Valenti made the personal touch into a kind of credo. Johnson put him in charge of handling relations with certain important leaders in Congress, who knew that when they had a problem they could call Valenti and obtain a quick response from the President. Valenti prided himself on giving them "instant service." In a note to the President in February, 1965, Valenti wrote, "Thought you would like to know that so far I have written 110 letters, personal letters, to the Congressmen and Senators I have personally talked to at the Congressional receptions." In another memo, Valenti advocated that Johnson regularly phone newspaper editors, invite influential people to dinner, and correspond in "chatty letters" with other heads of government. He wrote, "What I am suggesting is that the President fasten down support for his cause by resorting to an unchanging human emotion—the need to feel wanted and admired. The personal touch is so vitally important. I suspect sometimes we overlook its high value."

It was odd that someone whose métier was image creation should do so poorly with his own. Reporters quickly noted the fatuous way Valenti spoke about L.B.J., and how the diminutive aide gazed up at the President as he hurried along at his side, and how eagerly he leaped to perform the most menial tasks; within the first year, the press had dubbed him "the valet," and the epithet stuck. Valenti put on a cavalier front, but he was stung. ("I hate that *Wall Street Journal*," he said to the President in a phone conversation in November of 1964. "They're the ones who are always calling me 'the valet,' and I wouldn't have truck with 'em. Screw 'em!") Valenti's reputation for servility was underscored by the common knowledge that Johnson heaped abuse on him. Johnson, of course, was notorious for his tirades, and Valenti was not his only target. "Any of us who got that treatment would say, 'Better he blow our heads off than do that to Khrushchev!'" James Jones, a former White House aide, recalled. "We all felt it was a way of letting off pressure. But Jack got it more than most. L.B.J.'s scathing ripping into Jack was painful to watch."

In June of 1965, Valenti delivered a famous speech to an American Advertising Federation convention, in which he declared that there is a "curious upsoaring of mind and spirit that seems, as if by godly osmosis, to invade the veins of a man the moment he becomes President"—and that this President "has extra glands, I am persuaded, that give him energy that ordinary men simply don't have." He concluded with words that will outlive him: "I sleep each night a little better, a little more confidently because Lyndon Johnson is my President."

Valenti had sent a copy of his speech to L.B.J. before he delivered it; neither man anticipated the public response. As Johnson wrote in a note to the Washington attorney Clark Clifford about a week later, "I think Jack Valenti was most surprised that his public declaration of affection and approval of his boss brought a ton of newspaper print on his head." There was at the time a widespread concern about the President and his approach to his office, and Valenti's speech served to highlight Johnson's perceived flaws. Richard Rovere wrote about Johnson in this magazine in August, 1965, "There were stories almost daily that his temper had flared up, that he was enraged by even the most trivial kind of criticism, that he maintained an obsessive secrecy, and that he encouraged the kind of sycophancy that turned up in a speech by one of his closest associates, Jack Valenti." Such failings were hardly unprecedented in a leader, but it was the singularly autocratic nature of the Johnson Presidency which made them so troubling, Rovere continued, and bred the suspicion that policy might be driven by personal pique and obsession.

Years later, commenting on the last line of the speech, Valenti declared, "I must say, in my naïveté, I thought that was a nice flourish. I really thought that was a pretty good way to end that speech."

While he was serving Lyndon Johnson, Valenti cultivated his next patron—Lew Wasserman, whom Valenti, in later years, habitually referred to as "the tallest redwood in the movie forest." Wasserman—a commanding figure, taciturn and intimidating, but charming, too, when he chose to be—had arrived in Hollywood in 1938, at the age of twenty-five, as an agent for Jules Stein's Music Corporation of America. In the next fifteen years, Wasserman came to define and dominate first the talent-agency business and then the television-production business; and now, as the president of M.C.A./Universal Studios, he was setting out to create an international entertainment conglomerate—one that, if he had his way, would dominate that sphere as well. A few of the old Hollywood moguls like Barney Balaban, Darryl Zanuck, and Jack Warner were still in place, but this new epoch belonged to Wasserman. Although his predecessors had controlled their own fiefdoms, none of them had been generally recognized as the de-facto ruler of Hollywood. Wasserman was. And he was determined to forge a more potent connection with Washington than the industry had had in the past.

Toward this end, Wasserman at first worked closely with Arthur Krim, the formidable president of United Artists. Krim, a New York lawyer, had helped organize the 1962 birthday gala for President Kennedy at Madison Square Garden, where he was serenaded by Marilyn Monroe, followed by an all-night party at Krim's Upper East Side town house. The event brought in a million dollars—a huge sum at the time—and its success prompted Krim to create the President's Club. Its purpose was to establish an independent fund-raising operation, controlled by the White House, so that national candidates did not have to depend solely on transfers of money from local organizations. For a fee of a thousand dollars, members were afforded, mainly, the opportunity to meet the President at fund-raising dinners. Krim enlisted Wasserman to bring the President's Club to California, and in June of 1963 Wasserman made his political début, co-sponsoring a thousand-dollar-a-plate President's Club dinner for Kennedy at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

After Kennedy was assassinated, Wasserman went to work fund-raising for Johnson, and he and his allies raised more money for L.B.J. than California had ever contributed to a Democrat. "During the campaign in 1964, Johnson relied on him heavily," Valenti said. "He saw in Lew much of what he had himself—drive, instinct, judgment. It's not whether you scored sixteen hundreds in your S.A.T.s, or went to Harvard or San Marcos College"—L.B.J.'s alma mater. "It's whether you have good judgment. He thought Wasserman had good judgment—he had to, to lead the movie industry."

From the very start of his Presidency, in 1963, Johnson had recognized Hollywood's potential for fund-raising, and he saw the M.P.A.A., Hollywood's Washington embassy, as a critical base. When Theodore Sorensen, the speechwriter for President Kennedy, told Johnson in mid-December, 1963, that he was quitting the White House staff, Johnson immediately proposed that he take the job of president of the M.P.A.A. (Since 1922, when the organization was founded, by Carl Laemmle, Samuel Goldwyn, and Adolph Zukor, among others, it had had only two presidents, both with Washington experience—Will Hays, the Postmaster General in the Harding Administration, and Eric Johnston, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, and an emissary for President Roosevelt.) Sorensen, however, didn't take the job.

Other names were floated, from Adlai Stevenson to Pierre Salinger, but the post remained vacant for more than two years, mainly because the studio heads could not agree on a candidate. At one point, Louis Nizer, a partner in the New York law firm that Krim had joined, became the likely nominee, but Wasserman decided that Nizer, who was sixty-four, was too old for the job. Quickly, he fastened on Valenti ("It doesn't hurt to be so close to the President, he was young, he was personable," Wasserman said), and, with his good friend Edwin Weisl, Sr., a New York lawyer active in Democratic politics, went to see Johnson. "He threw us out of his office," Wasserman claimed, "but he called me a couple of days later and said, 'You can have him.' "

There was at the time a fairly preva-

"Well, don't just stand there looking precancerous."

lent, and different, view: that despite voluble protests L.B.J. made to Valenti about his proposed departure (according to Valenti, Johnson called him "a Benedict Arnold"), Johnson had "asked Lew to take care of Valenti," as one of Wasserman's assistants told me. "Johnson was very pleased about Jack's going to the M.P.A.A.," the Johnson aide James Jones recalled, "either because he had engineered it or because Lew Wasserman had convinced him that Jack Valenti could do more for him in fund-raising in the Hollywood community." On the eve of Valenti's resignation, on April 25, 1966, Johnson sent him a note. "You know how much I will miss your companionship, your good cheer, your brilliant mind, and your storehouse of information," L.B.J. wrote, and he went on, "You have been some very special something to me for a long time—first because of Mary Margaret, and then Courtenay, but really, all the time—it was you yourself."

Valenti was awed by Wasserman's power. When Wasserman offered him the job, he had assured Valenti that the board would elect him; indeed, Valenti said, he did not even meet the board before his selection was announced. "Lew was so dominant," Valenti said. "He was respected and feared by all these moguls."

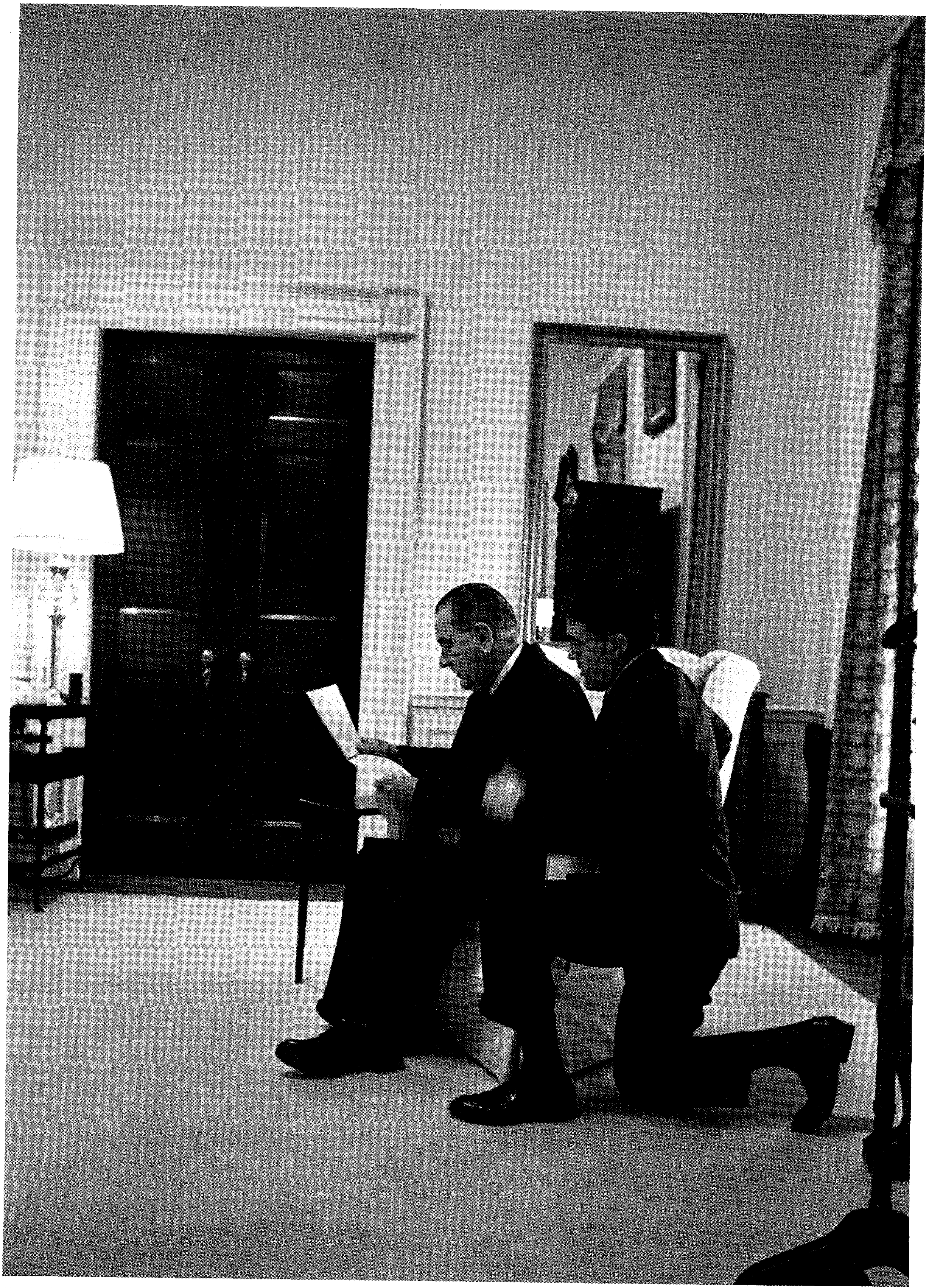
For Valenti, it was a remarkable opportunity. Even before joining the L.B.J. White House, he had entertained some political ambitions—perhaps running for Congress, or for mayor of Houston. But he had had to borrow to augment his White House salary, which was twenty-eight thousand dollars a year, and the M.P.A.A. salary of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, with a seven-year contract, would solve his financial problems. It would make him a personage in a world that Valenti found enthralling; he had been a starstruck fan since his days in Houston (as he wrote then about Zsa Zsa Gabor, "She doesn't enter a room. She envelops it. There is about her an aura of negligent grace that combines with a scent of mischief to leave an onlooker trembling, waiting, as it were, for something to happen"), and while he was in the White House he had struck up friendships with Charlton Heston and Kirk Douglas. He had no experience in Hollywood, but he'd had none in Washington when he arrived with Lyndon Johnson, either. George Stevens, Jr., the chief of the Motion Picture Service of the United States Information Agency in the early sixties, recalled that he would show films in the M.P.A.A. headquarters, a mansion not far from the White House. One night, the movie "Lilith" was featured, starring Warren Beatty and Jean Seberg, and directed by Robert Rossen, an accomplished writer-director, best known for "All the King's Men" and "The Hustler." "It was a rather perplexing picture," Stevens said. "When it was over, there was some applause (no one liked it much), and Jack turned to me and, in a low voice, asked, 'What do you say to somebody?' I suggested something. He strode up to the director, with his hand extended, and said, 'You've done it again, Mr. Rossen!' Rossen was thrilled. That was probably Jack's first brush with show business, and he pulled it off well. He was a quick study."

Going to the M.P.A.A. meant leaving Johnson, of course, but only to a degree: Valenti contrived to accompany the President on trips, make contacts on his behalf abroad, and give speeches for him on college campuses, and he continued to write memos offering information and flattery. And Valenti was not above using his intimacy with the President to help advance himself further, though he framed his efforts, always, as service. "I am so grateful to you for your kindness in putting me on the Kennedy Center Board," Valenti wrote to the President. "I will be involved often with heads of government and chiefs of state. . . . I want to be useful to you on these trips if I can, and if I can discreetly. Would it not be useful if you considered putting me on some group or commission where I would be officially privy to a certain category of secrecy. For example, is there a vacancy on Clifford's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board?"

Valenti's tie to the President and his experience with Congress made him a natural choice for Hollywood. Movies had begun to reflect the social ferment of the sixties, and were pushing the boundaries in language and nudity. In a backlash, municipal and state censorship boards had sprung up, and the threat of government regulation had driven the studios to propose self-regulation instead. "There was a fire out there," recalled the Viacom chairman Sumner Redstone, who at that time headed the National Association of Theatre Owners. "We could have taken the constitutional defense, but this was better. It was a perfect middle ground—you don't have to attack us, we'll regulate ourselves." Self-regulation had been the mantra of the M.P.A.A. since 1922; but the old system, the Hays Production Code, which contained an explicit compendium of what was and was not permissible for a movie in order to receive a seal of approval ("Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embracing, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown"), was archaic. Its unrealistic provisions were being increasingly ignored. "I will never forget the year Jack came in," Warren Beatty told me. "I was producing my first picture, 'Bonnie and Clyde.' And I was sitting with Father Sullivan at Warner Bros.—going backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, on a scene of Faye Dunaway, running down the steps, not wearing a bra under her blouse—I, saying that you could not see her nipple, Father Sullivan, fearing you could."

Valenti set about devising a voluntary national movie-ratings system, in which a ratings board, operating under the auspices of the M.P.A.A., would classify movies in order to give parents warnings about what their children would see. A film, depending on its violence, nudity, sensuality, or objectionable language, would be rated G, for general audiences; PG, parental guidance suggested, but all ages admitted; R, restricted (no one under sixteen admitted without an adult); or X, no one under seventeen admitted. This code, introduced in 1968, was a far less restrictive system than the Hays Code, but it was less revolutionary than Valenti always proclaimed. He deplored the Hays Code, finding in its "stern, forbidding catalogue of 'Dos and Don'ts' the odious smell of censorship." But, just as movie studios had needed the Hays Code seal of approval to distribute their films, so now they needed one of the less restrictive ratings for their movies to reach a large enough audience to succeed eco-

COURTESY YOICHI OKAMOTO/LBJ LIBRARY



Valenti with his idol, L.B.J., in January, 1964. His devotion to the President was so extreme that the press called him "the valet."

nomically. Producers, therefore, censored themselves—or, in many instances, bartered with the ratings board over exactly what editing was required to receive the desired rating.

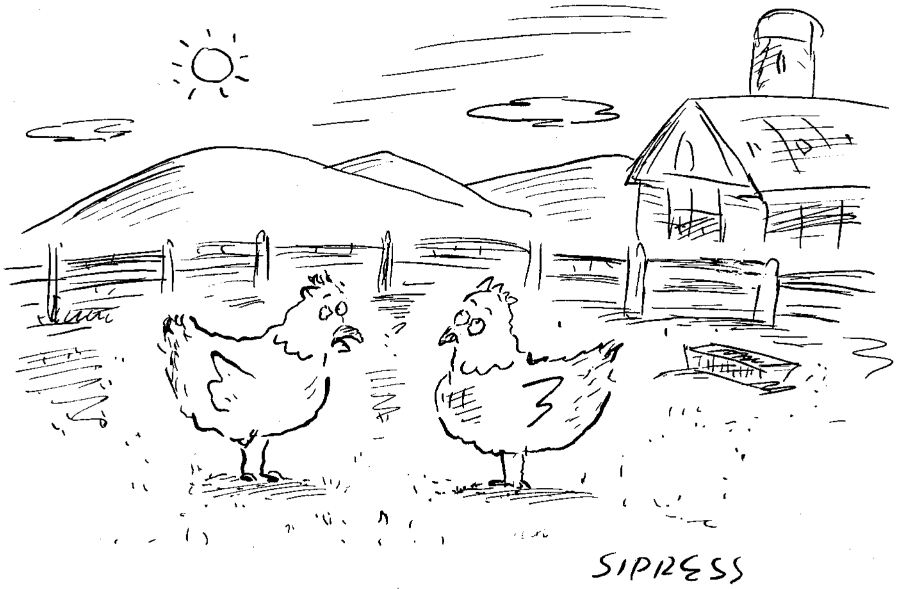
To build support for his plan, Valenti met with theatre owners and distributors; actors, writers, directors, and producers; craft unions and religious organizations; and, of course, M.P.A.A. member companies. Most of the studio heads were opposed at first, he told me, "because they were afraid of the unknown." But, he said, he had Wasserman and Krim on his side. "Using them as a battering ram, I was able to beat back the other studio heads." In Valenti's scenario, he was portraying himself as the protagonist; he had, after all, metamorphosed overnight from Presidential assistant to movie czar. Still, although Valenti doubtless did the labor required to devise and sell this new rating system, he would have undertaken it only at Wasserman's behest. As Valenti himself had pointed out, Wasserman was the power in the movie world. He preferred, however, to wield his power indirectly; he rarely granted press interviews, and he avoided the limelight. Not so Valenti. Johnson and Valenti's White House colleagues had ribbed him about his eagerness for press exposure; Bill Moyers, with whom Valenti had an uneasy relationship, had once written to a newspaper editor, "I suggest you introduce Jack Valenti as the man who took Lyndon Johnson to the Far East. It seems Jack was on the front page of every newspaper where the President went on his recent trip." Now when Valenti preened for the press he was doing his job, and enabling Wasserman to stay in the background; he was, in that sense, Wasserman's perfect surrogate.

Washington had been hard on Valenti, but in Hollywood he was in his element. In early 1967, he sent President Johnson an article about himself which had appeared in the Los Angeles *Times*, underlining these words: "Whatever else is true, it is clear what Lyndon Johnson saw in him. For president Valenti is fiercely energetic, enthusiastic, politic, realistic, perceptive and persuasive." Valenti attached a note, saying, "Funny, how all of a sudden I am now bright, charming, delightful—when a year ago, I was a valet and a clumsy Texas oaf!" In the movie colony, his flamboyance fit right in, his flattery was well received, his verbal affectation was much admired. He formed close, lasting friendships with Warren Beatty and Angie Dickinson. And he was clever enough to grasp that stars were an invaluable resource that, properly deployed, could help his bosses' causes on Capitol Hill in ways that had not been tried before. Frank Yablans, who was the head of Paramount in the early seventies and dealt extensively with Valenti, commented, "He's a true political operative. He understood better than anyone else the power of celebrity, the power of Hollywood in the political world."

Translating that power of Hollywood into votes in Congress was Valenti's cardinal task. Every lobbyist tries to court the representatives and senators whose votes he covets; Valenti was the consummate courtier. The M.P.A.A., in its mansion headquarters, had had a modest screening room; now a large new building was constructed on the same site, featuring a huge office for Valenti (and a phone number, 1966, commemorating his arrival), an underground parking garage, and a state-of-the-art screening room that became a Washington institution. Valenti would regularly invite an assortment of power brokers, senators, congressmen, other government officials, lawyers, and journalists for dinner and a movie. As Wasserman told me, "Jack had the pick of the pictures, and he'd match the guests to the pictures. He wouldn't invite far-right congressmen to see half-naked women." Lawrence Levinson, at the time a Washington representative for Paramount, said, "Jack was able to use the power and glamour and mystique of Hollywood. A new President came in, and he'd put himself in the center of the process of getting movies to the President. He'd get so excited. He'd call Sid Sheinberg"—the president of M.C.A./Universal—"and say, 'Sid! The President is going to Camp David! We've got to get him "Jaws"!' "

Applying the lessons he'd learned from L.B.J., Valenti spread his bonhomie across the political lot. "Jack knows how to introduce the most right-wing Republican to the most left-wing Hollywood group," Sheinberg said. "Watching this, you get to think, This is the man. You get the feeling that he's their best friend, they're his best friend. He says they're doing great things for our industry. They start out by saying, 'Do you know what a great job this man is doing for your industry? If there's anyone who can get me on the phone at 1 A.M., it's Jack Valenti!' " Sheinberg concluded, "Now, if it seemed there was a faux genuineness about all this—hell, they're politicians."

Valenti cultivated ideological foes with special fervor. "Jesse Helms has



"Here's what I don't get—we don't even have fingers."

KYUSHU HYDRANGEA

Some might say there are too many
for a charity hospital, too many pale
pink blossoms opening into creamy
paler ones, just when everything else
is dying in the garden. They can't see
the huge, upright panicles correspond
to something else, something not external at all,
but its complement, that atmosphere of pure
unambiguous light burning inwardly,
not in self-regard but in self-forgetting;
they can't see the lush rainy-season flowers,
with feet planted partially in rock,
lifting their big solemn heads over
the verdant wounded hands of the leaves.

—*Henri Cole*

been an unbelievable friend to me on issues that are important," Valenti told me. Their affinity stems from an M.P.A.A. screening, many years ago; it was a full house, with not a seat to spare, Valenti recalled, and Helms's young grandsons were among the guests. "I told them, 'You sit with me.' We talked about movies, sports. I didn't chat with any of the senators. The next day, Helms called me and said, 'I appreciate it so much.' " Indeed, according to a friend of Valenti's, Helms told him that day, "You have my marker." Valenti also made sure that attacks did not become personal. "I watched L.B.J. illuminate this concept with the Republican leader of the Senate," Valenti said, referring to Everett Dirksen. "Dirksen would rise on the Senate floor and flagellate Johnson—it sounded like he was talking about Caligula—and then Johnson and he would be having a drink at six-thirty that evening." Valenti had the politician's gift, too, for conveying to people with adverse views that he understood those positions, and perhaps even shared them. In 1992, when Charlton Heston attacked Time Warner for distributing the music of Ice-T, with its violent lyrics, he first consulted with Valenti. Time Warner, of course, was an M.P.A.A. member, but, according to Heston, Valenti said, " 'Chuck, you have to do what you have to do.' And he agreed with me, though of course he couldn't say it publicly."

Valenti also continued the practice of "instant service" that he had performed under L.B.J.; he was diligent about responding promptly to calls from senators and congressmen. In his congressional presentations, he made sure to distill complex issues, indulged his fondness for purple prose, and brought some neon to the normally monochromatic hearing rooms. "Jack *should* represent Hollywood—he's theatrical, he's a showman," Charles Ferris, a Washington attorney and former government official, said. "When I was chairman of the F.C.C., I had an open-door policy—any staff could come in and sit in on meetings when someone was making a presentation. They all wanted to come in and listen to Jack. He was the best show in town!"

Valenti's powers sprang largely from his connection to Wasserman. It was all of a piece; Wasserman installed Valenti as the president of the M.P.A.A., the M.P.A.A. essentially became Wasserman's vehicle—and Wasserman provided Valenti with his modus operandi. Money was essential. The President's Club had been a kind of dress rehearsal. Wasserman, while still organizing big dinners at hotels for a thousand or more guests, began having fund-raisers at his home—for the President, for the Democratic National Committee, for senators and congressmen. "In Hollywood, an invitation to Lew's house was like an invitation to the President's house—a command performance," said Lloyd Hand, a major California organizer in Johnson's 1964 campaign, who became Johnson's chief of protocol. Moreover, Wasserman's influence extended far beyond the province of Hollywood. "Because it was a movie colony, there was a kind of power that you couldn't have in New York or Washington," Robert Strauss, the Washington attorney and former chairman of the D.N.C., said. "Lew was the only person I knew who had one foot in the movie business, one foot in the business and financial community, one foot in the political community. He could call the Catholic Church as easily as a rabbi, a defense contractor or labor leader as easily as a studio chief. No one had that reach."

Wasserman insisted that he have absolute control of an event if it was at his home; every event was a "turnkey" operation, Strauss said—all the recipient had to do was show up to collect the precise amount that Wasserman had said would be raised. Only those guests approved by Wasserman would be invited; M.C.A. had developed a computerized list of contributors, and it was closely guarded. "It was gold," said George Smith, an M.C.A. corporate vice-president who worked closely with Wasserman on legislative affairs. Select stars, like Jill St. John and Angie Dickinson, were on hand to lend glamour. "Lew watched every detail," Smith said. "He would do the table seating himself—because he knew who hated whom, who would be outraged at not being near the honored guest, how to handle the fifteen egomaniacs who all had to be at the main table for ten."

As for Valenti, Smith went on, politicians knew that he represented Wasserman, "the gray eminence." To raise funds, congressmen and senators would turn to him, and if they were members of the committees most important to Hollywood—Finance, Commerce, and Judiciary—the fund-raisers would often be held at Wasserman's home. Even those who were fêted elsewhere would likely raise between twenty-five and forty thousand dollars, Smith said. "Not a bad trip for a senator and his spouse; they'd visit a studio or two—I promise you it beat going to Omaha!" In the seventies and eighties, he continued, "I don't think a month went by without a fund-raiser for someone in Hollywood, and

"Omigod. You're backpedalling."

• •

Jack would fly out for them. You make a lot of friends doing that over the years."

Sidney Sheinberg commented, "Without detracting from Jack's ability to cater to these people and build relationships, the truth, to be candid, is that politicians, then and now, tend to like those who enable them to raise money. And had Jack not had the Lew Wassermans of the world—although there was, really, just one Lew Wasserman—Jack would not have been so successful."

In 1976, Wasserman's Washington strategy paid off brilliantly, netting billions of dollars in tax savings for the industry, and about a billion dollars for M.C.A. alone. During the Kennedy Administration, in order to stimulate the flagging manufacturing and construction industries, Congress had passed a bill on investment tax credits, allowing American companies to write off seven per cent of any investment made in machinery and equipment. The film industry was not included. In the late sixties, however, a lawyer for the Walt Disney Company came up with the novel proposition that film should be considered a tangible property, deserving of an investment tax credit. After wending its way through the courts and the I.R.S., the effort to win inclusion culminated in a battle in Congress. "Lew went into high gear," Smith recalled. "Without Lew, we would have failed. No one loved the film industry." Valenti was Wasserman's operative, though he tends to describe their roles as being equivalent. ("Lew, along with me, was the architect of this effort," Valenti told me.) When the tax-credit measure came to the floor of the Senate for debate, Edward Kennedy argued strongly against extending the tax credit to the film industry, saying that it would amount to an "outright tax subsidy for a service industry." But California's Senator Alan Cranston and other Wasserman allies prevailed, and the measure carried. "Cranston called Lew from the floor," Smith recalled. " 'Done!' "

To Valenti, one of his most important victories involved a struggle over Federal Communications Commission rules, in the early eighties. In 1970, the three main networks—ABC, CBS, and NBC—were capturing about ninety per cent of the television audience, and the F.C.C. wanted to curb their control over the distribution of programming, in this country and overseas. It instituted rules concerning financial interest and syndication—known as fin-syn—which restricted the networks' right to syndicate their own shows, and to have a financial interest in others. Fin-syn was a windfall for the Hollywood studios; it gave them carte blanche to increase their involvement in TV production and strengthen their domestic and foreign distribution. It also encouraged the growth of diversified entertainment conglomerates—like M.C.A.—with interests in movies, television, music, and other media. By the early eighties, the networks, facing increased competition from new technologies, including cable television, had weakened dramatically; indeed, an F.C.C. study of the situation, completed in the late seventies, concluded that the fin-syn rules should be abolished.

In August of 1983, the F.C.C. proposed repealing many of its fin-syn rules. "I was in Hawaii when Lew, Sid Sheinberg, and Barry Diller called me," Valenti recalled. (Diller was the chairman of Paramount.) " 'We have a big problem. We want to go to war, and you are our commander-in-chief.' " Soon, the Commerce Department and the Justice Department filed a series of comments with the F.C.C., supporting the repeal; their position was not surprising, given that the Reagan Administration was ardently committed to deregulation. Lawrence Levinson recalled that the studios were afraid the networks were about to be unshackled. "The studios developed a huge war chest—it was the most important of Hollywood issues ever. But Mark Fowler"—the F.C.C. chairman—"was saying, 'Nuts to Hollywood! We have to have a free market for TV programs.' "

Valenti lobbied tirelessly in Washington, and met with the Presidential counsellor Edwin Meese III, but in the end, according to Levinson, "it was found necessary to have Wasserman himself talk to Reagan. So there was this conversation between Lew and Reagan. Suddenly, the chairman of the F.C.C. was summoned to the White House, lectured by Ed Meese, and the rule was put back." (Meese and Fowler deny that such a meeting ever occurred or that any attempt was made to change the F.C.C.'s proposed ruling.)

Michael Deaver, the deputy chief of staff to President Reagan, confirmed that

Wasserman had come to see Reagan to ask that the rules not be repealed. Wasserman had become Reagan's agent in the late thirties, and each had done favors for the other over the years. "They were friendly, and Lew was very powerful, and he spoke for the industry. And Reagan loved that industry," Deaver said. "He would talk about it, much more than about the Presidency." Deaver also confirmed that it was Meese who delivered the message to Fowler about "what Reagan wanted."

When I asked Wasserman about his attempt to lobby Reagan, he replied, "Most things in Washington that are done are done quietly—because if you do it publicly, in the House or in the Senate, it can be very difficult."

At Reagan's behest, the Justice and Commerce Departments reversed their positions, to favor the retention of the rules. It was, of course, one thing for Reagan to have ordered his Cabinet officers to reverse themselves, and another to have interfered with the F.C.C., an independent agency. Charles Ferris, who preceded Fowler as F.C.C. chairman, said, "Reagan took Mark to the woodshed, and that was that. It was improper—the F.C.C. is an independent regulatory agency, a creature of Congress."

Hollywood had averted disaster. The F.C.C. agreed that the movie studios and the TV networks could conduct their own settlement negotiations. "The object was delay, delay, delay, never make a deal," Robert Daly, then the co-head of Warner Bros., who became Hollywood's chief negotiator in these settlement talks, recalled. (The rules weren't abolished until 1994.) "The relationship between Lew and Reagan was really the thing. I remember this meeting," Daly continued, pointing to a framed photograph of President Reagan with Wasserman, Valenti, himself, and three other studio heads. "It wasn't to discuss the issue of the financial-interest-syndication rules, it was to bless it. And Reagan had a great line. He said, 'If I had this much attention from so many studio heads, I never would have run for office!' "

On paper, Valenti had many bosses—all the heads of the major studios that were M.P.A.A. members—but it was Wasserman who decided what course he should follow in Washington, and Wasserman who protected him when his contract came up for renewal and when his budget came under review. It might seem surprising, then, that it was also Wasserman who, in the mid-eighties, began looking for someone to replace Valenti. Valenti had by then held his position for nearly twenty years. "Lew Wasserman was constantly concerned about having a successor to Jack," Sidney Sheinberg, the former head of M.C.A./Universal, said. "Jack never groomed even a theoretical successor—there never was a guy or a woman who for a moment you thought could succeed him." Sheinberg added that Valenti's territorial instinct extended beyond the M.P.A.A.; he also viewed as rivals those M.C.A. executives whose duties overlapped with his in some way. "Jack felt challenged by people, felt everything should be handled by him."

Valenti won over some Republicans, but the Democrats were his true allies; and in the Reagan years, with a Republican-controlled Congress, more and more M.P.A.A. members were asking whether they wouldn't do better with a Republican as their head. In 1985, when Michael Deaver was still in the Reagan White House, Wasserman paid him a visit to ask if he would like to head the M.P.A.A. Deaver told me, "I said I would very much like to do that. Then Lew came back to see me—with Jack. It turned out that Jack was not ready to retire. The understanding was that he would stay there awhile—he would be chairman, I president—and I would become the head when he retired." Under those conditions, Deaver said, he decided against it. "And look!" he exclaimed, when I interviewed him last spring. "Sixteen years later, he's still there!"

In the late eighties, according to Lawrence Levinson, "Some people in the industry were beginning to question, 'Is Jack the guy?' It was getting to be the edge of mutiny. People were saying, 'If something happened to you tomorrow, who would be your successor?' Jack was very nimble. He took the pressure off by appointing Bill Baker, who had been at the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. for many years. Jack put him in Los Angeles, in charge of worldwide anti-piracy." Ten years later, Baker resigned after realizing, he said, that he could never rise in the organization.

Levinson said of Valenti that "he learned from the Master. . . . It was the Johnson model of not having a strong No. 2 man. I would say to him, 'You're like Papa Duvalier! You're president for life!' He didn't think it was so funny. His argument to me was 'Look at the Supreme Court! They're sitting there, they go on and on!' "

Valenti's job now seemed secure

"Can you hear me now?"

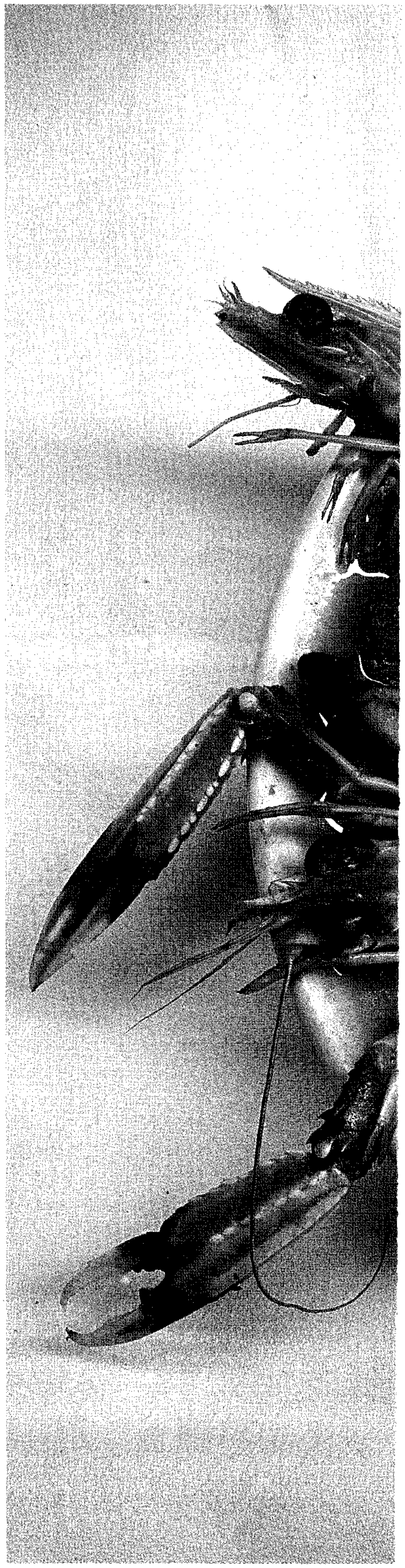
again, but everything else about the M.P.A.A. was changing. The conglomerates that controlled many of the studios were growing ever larger, and the media world was consolidating into fewer players. Robert Daly, who left Time Warner in 1999 to become chairman of the Los Angeles Dodgers, recalled that in the eighties, when he and Terry Semel headed the Warner Bros. studio, "It was, really, the last time there were real studio heads. It was so different from today, when studios are such small parts of such big companies." In those days, Daly continued, the studios and the networks were enemies. But, once the fin-syn rules were finally abolished, studios (or their parent companies) began to buy networks. The M.P.A.A.'s member companies were no longer a homogeneous, if fractious, group. "It was easy when we had a common enemy," Daly said. "But it got to a point in the last eight or nine years that I recommended to Jack not to get us all in the room at the same time." M.P.A.A. meetings used to be held many times a year; now they are rare. Today, the only "enemies" that all M.P.A.A. members have in common are piracy and copyright infringement.

If life was better for studio heads when they were not mere cogs in giant machines, it was also better for Valenti. "When the mega-companies came in, they wanted to have *their* perspective represented, not the movie companies' perspective," said Barbara Dixon, a former vice-president of public affairs at the M.P.A.A., who joined the organization in 1985 and worked closely with Valenti for thirteen years. "The companies changed, their goals changed, and the way they managed their operations changed. They had their own offices in D.C., so we had to get consensus not only in L.A. but also in D.C., with multinationals who would hate each other."

Fund-raising, too, is no longer the same. Wasserman, whose beloved M.C.A./Universal has changed hands three times in the last decade—first to Matsushita, then to Seagram, and now to Vivendi—still hosts an occasional event, or talks to a particular senator at Valenti's request, but he is now in his late eighties, and has withdrawn from the fund-raising circuit; the apparatus

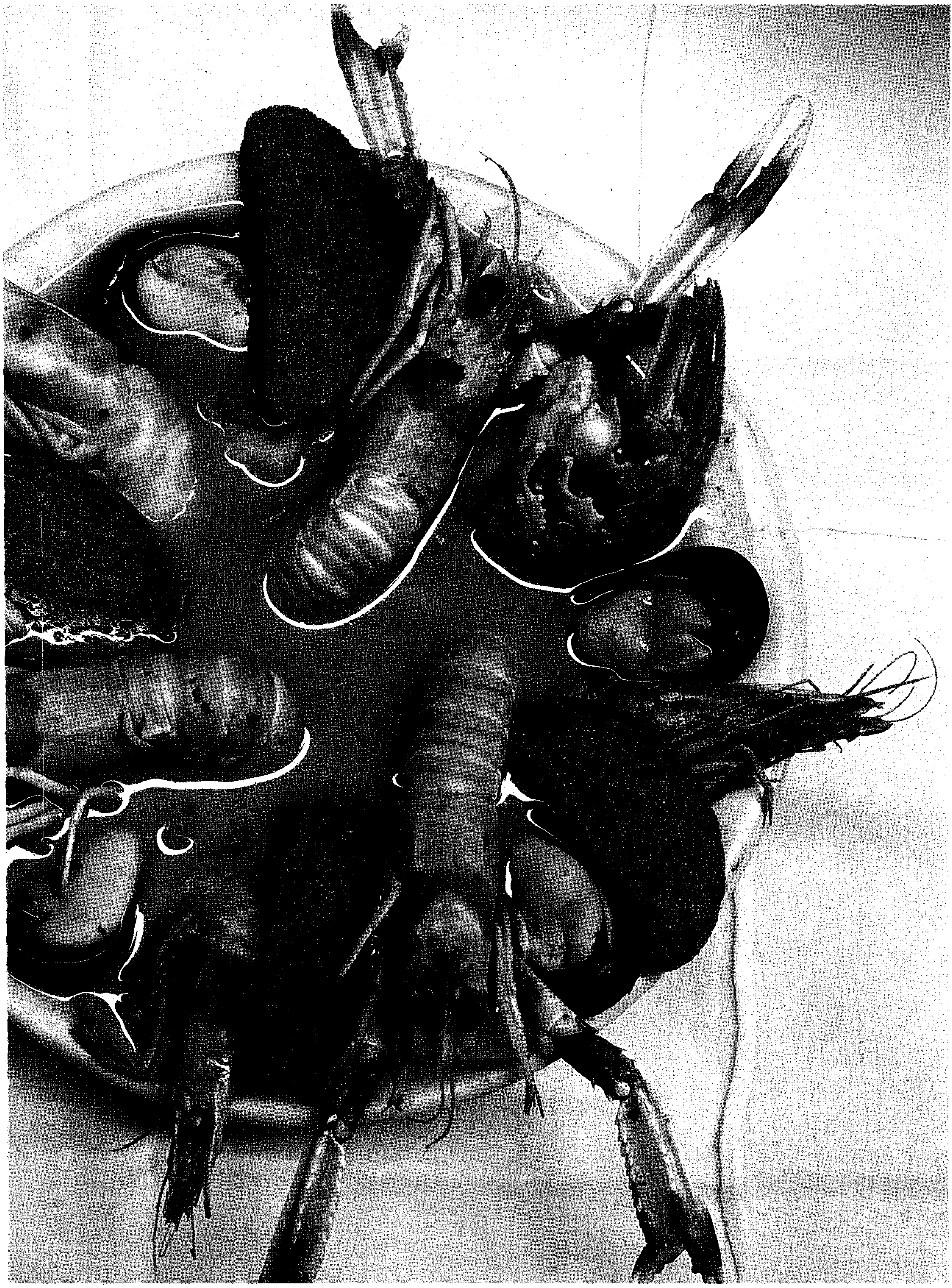
SHOWCASE

PENN'S SOUP



The bowl of bouillabaisse photographed by Irving Penn in Barcelona in 1948 was prepared in a restaurant, Los Caracoles. "Working alone," Penn says, "I placed the bowl on two napkins on the sidewalk outside, exposed by daylight." You can make out the folds in the napkins and even the threads. Most of Penn's still-lifes are assembled in a studio, and, for the last fifty years or so, they have had barely recognizable backgrounds, or none at all. They are painstakingly arranged and lit, and the surfaces are impeccable. The liquid in the bouillabaisse, on the other hand, has slopped around the edges of the bowl a bit. It's messy. Nevertheless, the picture seems painterly. The langoustines and mussels and garlic croutons look composed. Penn doesn't remember arranging the contents of the dish, he says, "although, knowing myself, I may have poked at it." John Szarkowski, in the foreword to Penn's new book, "Still Life," which will be published by Bulfinch in September, compares his work to that of the Spanish painters Zurbarán and Sánchez Cotán. Penn has mentioned Uccello and de Chirico as sources of inspiration. In this case, one suspects the hand of Salvador Dali, who accompanied Penn for a few days in Barcelona, where Penn had been sent to take photographs for a *Vogue* feature called "Barcelona and Picasso." Dali intervened, perhaps understandably, since Barcelona was more his town than Picasso's, and Penn acknowledges that one of the photographs that appeared in the magazine, of a mysterious horse-drawn hearse in front of Gaudí's Sagrada Familia, was a nod to Dali. He says he photographed the bouillabaisse because he was told that it was Picasso's favorite dish, but those langoustines are more likely the cousins of the big red lobsters in Dali's paintings.

—*Sharon DeLano*



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he created and dominated for so many years has lost its engine. Valenti is no longer at the center of Hollywood's money-raising. "It's a changed world, and Jack's power is less," one friend of his said. "But does he walk around with a hangdog look, bemoaning that things are not what they used to be? No. When he walks down the corridors of Congress, he exudes confidence, he's like"—Valenti's friend smiled—"a strutting peacock!"

Last April, as congressional criticism of Hollywood was resuming in anticipation of a follow-up F.T.C. report, Valenti asked Wasserman to attend a private meeting between Senator Lieberman and studio executives. Lieberman has long railed against the level of sex and violence in Hollywood's products. In this instance, even Wasserman's presence did not have its old effect. Days later, Lieberman unveiled the Media Marketing Accountability Act—a bill that would define as a violation of Federal Trade Commission statutes the advertising of adult-rated movies, music, and video games to minors, empowering the F.T.C. to issue cease-and-desist orders or to levy large fines. Valenti responded angrily. If the bill were to become law, he declared, filmmakers who participated in the ratings system would risk prosecution, while those who ignored it would be immune; therefore, he would "reluctantly recommend" to his M.P.A.A. member companies that they scrap the ratings system.

Both men were posturing. Lieberman's introduction of the bill almost surely has more to do with his being a Democratic hopeful in the 2004 Presidential election than with any serious attempt at making law, and Valenti wanted to capture press attention, and, perhaps, show his employers that the ratings system was really not his sacred cow. (Although there have been a couple of modifications to the system since it was introduced, in 1968, Valenti has always resisted change; he evidently does not want his creation to be tampered with.)

MOM'S MORTUARY
SHE WAS NEVER THE SAME AFTER THAT CRACKPOT DIET
HE PUSHED HIMSELF TOO HARD.
HE MOVED TO FLORIDA, AND BOOM: FIVE MINUTES LATER HE WAS DEAD.
SHE WAS A FLOOZY, AND THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS TO FLOOZIES.
HE NEVER SHOULD HAVE DIVORCED HIS FIRST WIFE.
R. Chast

In the last few years, critics of the rating system have charged that it is inconsistent, that it favors the studios over independents, that it rates sex more restrictively than violence, and gay sex more so than straight, and that it is censorship in the guise of ratings. Many have argued for the creation of an adult category, plainly distinct from pornography. NC-17 (children under seventeen not admitted), like the X it replaced, is not that; NC-17 movies are boycotted by many media outlets, theatre chains, and video stores. Thus, moviemakers are desperate to receive a rating no more restrictive than R (children under seventeen require an accompanying adult), and will often recut and recut an NC-17 movie to make it an R. This rating, in turn, has become increasingly meaningless, applied to vastly different kinds of movies; more than two-thirds of all movies being released now are rated R. It is, in a way, the worst of all worlds: filmmakers' visions are compromised, and minors are likely to see movies that are really intended for adults. The movie critic Roger Ebert, who has for many years argued for a workable adult category—A—between R and NC-17, wrote in *Variety* in 1999, "Valenti's agonizing verbal twists and turns are all designed to obscure one obvious fact: He is against any rating that might cause theaters to turn away potential ticket buyers. In the name of providing guidance for parents, Valenti has presided over an explosion of smutty material that should be A but is being retailed as R."

Among the most outspoken critics of the ratings system have been Trey Parker and Matt Stone, who created "South Park," the cheerfully outrageous animated series on Comedy Central which made them famous and led to a movie—"South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut"—released in the summer of 1999. In the movie, a character says, "Remember what the M.P.A.A. says: Horrific, deplorable violence is O.K., as long as people don't say any naughty words." That, however, was nothing compared with what the writers have had to say about their experiences with the ratings board. Two years earlier, Parker and Stone had made a low-budget film, "Orgazmo," for October Films, an independent distributor. At the time, Stone told me, he thought of the M.P.A.A. as a quasi-governmental agency. "They set themselves up to look like a government organization to rate movies. It sounds naïve, but we thought of it as a relatively evenhanded, fair thing, and I think that's how the public sees it, too. I thought it was a little like the F.C.C. in radio—you know, you can't say 'fuck' on the public airwaves. And I had no problem with it. I thought it meant that as an artist you could do whatever you want, but you might get an NC-17."

"Hey, how come no diplomas?" "Oh, I'm self-taught."

When "Orgazmo" did indeed receive an NC-17, Stone said that he called the M.P.A.A. to ask what could be changed to make the movie an R. He was told that the board could not give specific notes on what caused the movie to be rated as it was (other than "over-all sexual nature"), and could not recommend cuts ("because that would be censorship"). He and Parker recut the movie, and resubmitted it; it came back NC-17. With a budget of nine hundred thousand dollars, they could not afford to reëdit it once again, so October Films released it with the NC-17 rating; it was shown in about ninety theatres, instead of perhaps six times that many, and it lost money. Then Stone and Parker made "South Park" for Paramount. It, too, was rated NC-17. "There was this guy at Paramount whose job it is to deal with this, and he said, 'There are seven problems—this line, this line, this line.' I said, 'What is this?' I remember getting these notes and saying, 'Holy shit! It's because it's a studio film!' " They resubmitted "South Park" six times, and in the end it received an R. "It's all a question of who has the money and can wear them down. But they won't even return your phone call when you're an independent."

Stone went on, "It's the hypocrisy that really gets me. Jack Valenti is not evil or malicious, but he's a P.R. guy, and he's set up this structure. There's no accountability, no transparency, just this secret group with all this power. They make the rules by which an entire industry has to play, but if you're an independent you have no say in it. He's done a good job of positioning the M.P.A.A. as a bulwark, holding back the smut of Hollywood for the parents of America. He says, 'I work for the parents, I work for Middle America'—but all he does is represent the studios."

In June of 1999, when Stone first asserted publicly that the ratings board had been more lenient to "South Park" because of pressure from Paramount, Valenti branded Stone's comments "an obscene lie." He declared, "I don't allow member companies to lean on the rating system." As Valenti had written in a pamphlet on the ratings system published in 1996, "The M.P.A.A. President chooses the Chairman of the Rating Board, thereby insulating the Board from industry or other group pressure. No one in the movie industry has the authority or the power to push the Board in any direction or otherwise influence it."

According to Richard Heffner, the chairman of the ratings board between 1974 and 1994, there was a big gap between Valenti's public pronouncements over the years and the reality. In interviews that he gave between 1995 and 1997 for an oral-history project at Columbia University, Heffner, an academic and a television commentator, asserted that Valenti himself was often the instrument of that pressure, although Heffner insisted that he did not succumb to it.

Heffner told the oral-history project that after he and his colleagues (whose identities were kept secret, to protect them from industry pressure) decided on a rating, the moviemakers had the right to appeal to a board composed of representatives of the major studios, theatre owners, and independent distributors. And although most appeals were denied, in some instances where the result mattered enormously to Valenti's bosses, Heffner alleged, "the fix was in."

On Thursday, April 22, 1982, for example, Heffner and his ratings-board colleagues saw the movie "Poltergeist," produced by Steven Spielberg for M-G-M, in Los Angeles and gave it a unanimous R; Heffner flew back to New York that night. As he said in his oral-history interview, "When I got home, there was a message from Jack Valenti to call him first thing in the morning. I called him Friday morning. He begged me to reconsider. M-G-M was at that time in dire financial straits, and the thinking was if M-G-M didn't get a PG for 'Poltergeist' it wasn't going to be pulled out of its financial doldrums, it would go down the drain, it would not be able to contribute its dues to the M.P.A.A. Anyway, he said, 'Go back and look at it again, Dick, please.' ”

Heffner said that Valenti also asked him to go to M-G-M following the rescreening, to give the news to two top M-G-M executives, Frank Rothman and Frank Rosenfelt, and to Spielberg. Once again, Heffner and the board voted for an R rating. He went to M-G-M and reported this. The meeting grew heated; Rothman protested the rating board's "unfair treatment," arguing that if "Poltergeist" were a Universal picture it would have received a PG. ("Everyone felt Jack Valenti was Lew Wasserman's man," Heffner said, "and that I must be Jack's man, and . . . would have given Lew Wasserman a PG.") Spielberg, meanwhile, argued that the movie should be PG because "the film is all threat and fantasy, no reality . . . no language, no murder, no nudity, no sex," Heffner recalled. And Heffner told Spielberg that if there were another rating between PG and R—one that restricted younger children from seeing the movie unaccompanied—he would have thought it appropriate. (Heffner had been lobbying Valenti for another rating for years.) Spielberg drove him to the airport, Heffner continued, and said, "Listen, I want you to know that I know you need another rating. I'll get that for you." Heffner was skeptical, but Spielberg did work to get a new category, PG-13 (parents strongly cautioned), which was instituted two years later.

M-G-M appealed the "Poltergeist" R rating to the appeals board. Heffner had long argued that people from outside the industry should be included on the board, but Valenti's response was "Not so long as I'm here," Heffner said. By a vote of twenty to four, M-G-M won the appeal to have the R changed to a PG.

In the early years of Heffner's tenure, his relationship with Valenti appears to have been cordial, even warm—despite complaints to Valenti about interference. But gradually that civility eroded. In 1991, the two had a shouting match in the back of a limousine about whether the ratings system's rules should apply to language and drug content. As Heffner recounted it, Valenti did not want these rules applied any longer, because his bosses were complaining that they caused too many movies to be given restrictive ratings. Valenti ordered that they be quietly scotched. Valenti sent a rare memo to Heffner stating, "There are now no hard and fast Rules on anything . . . we will not publicize this at all." Heffner had been opposed to the rules, and he would have been glad to see them removed; but he insisted that since they had been publicly announced, and parents assumed they were in place, their repeal should be made public. In the end, Valenti—perhaps fearful that the press would hear about the covert policy change, and about his ongoing conflict with Heffner—dropped the issue. But, like his White House mentor, Valenti did not tolerate what he viewed as disloyalty, or challenges to his rule.

In 1988, Heffner recalled, Valenti had said, "Dick, suppose you get hit by a truck? Suppose something happens to you? What's going to happen to those notes?" He was referring to a daily log of M.P.A.A. activities that Heffner had kept. Heffner went on, "He came to me with the offer of a great deal more money, but with a codicil to my contract, in which I said essentially that he had absolute control over anything I might ever write or say or speak or give hand signals about concerning the motion-picture industry without the specific approval of Jack Valenti." Heffner refused. (Valenti says that it was a standard confidentiality agreement.)

Now, in 1991, Valenti offered Heffner a contract that provided for his departure in a couple of years; Heffner accepted. According to Heffner, Valenti assured him that within a year of Heffner's departure he, too, would be retiring from the M.P.A.A.

Today, Courtenay Lynda Valenti is a thirty-eight-year-old vice-president at Warner Bros. She has a younger brother, John Lyndon, who is thirty-five and is a partner in an Internet company. A third sibling, Alexandra, born in 1968, is a screenwriter. Their mother, Mary Margaret, is involved in numerous charitable and public-service activities. Their father will be celebrating his eightieth birthday in September, and the inevitable question of retirement still arises. (Kirk Douglas says, "I told Jack recently, 'What about a hundred? Isn't that a good time to retire?' ") Writing is an avocation in which Valenti takes special pride—in the last twenty years, he has published four books, and he is currently working on two novels—but he almost shudders at the thought of doing it full time. "Too lonely. If I left this job, which I have no intention of doing, I would start my fourth career," he declared brightly, "and write on the side." Keeping his job all these years was hardly effortless, but Valenti made it appear so. Taking his cue from some of his bosses, who managed to merge their identities with their companies', Valenti sought to create a similar kind of perceptual fusion. As his friend Sumner Redstone told me, "I don't mean this in an arrogant way, but I am Viacom. And Jack Valenti is the M.P.A.A." For more than thirty years, that was the conceit. Valenti is determined not to relinquish this hard-won asset even now—though his power is diminished and his job has become increasingly difficult.

But the more he is tested, Valenti insists, the more he likes it. As a case in point, he mentioned an evening he spent at Harvard Law School last fall, debating Professor Lawrence Lessig on the future of intellectual property in cyberspace.

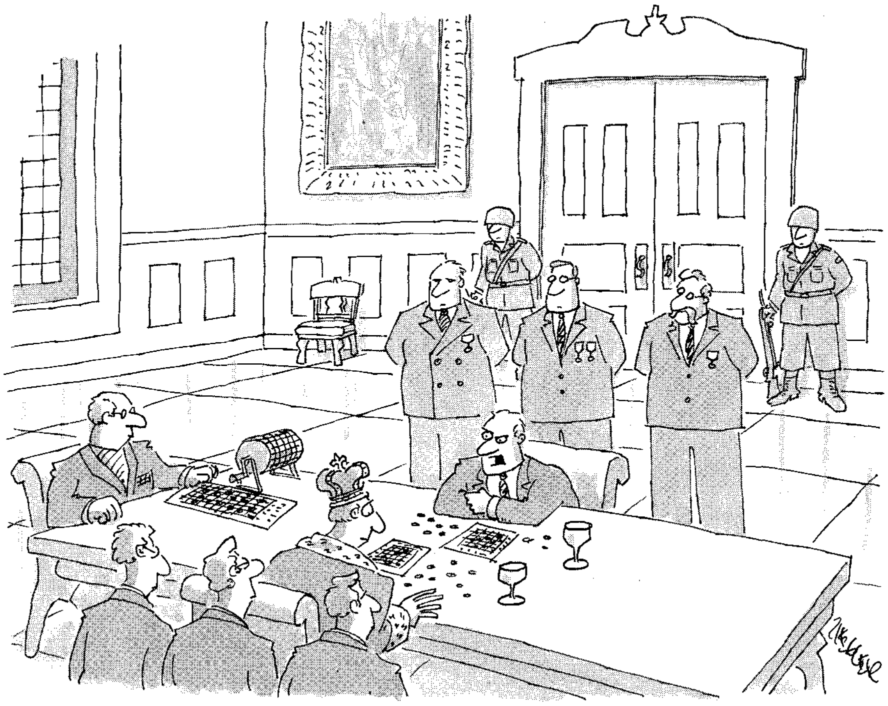
Characteristically, Valenti sought to disarm the people in the audience, calling them "the best and the brightest," as well as his opponent—"Larry is one of the most charming, enchanting people ever to shove a lance dipped in curare right up my backside." He let them know that he, too, had a Harvard degree, though he confided that he had really wanted to become a lawyer. Lest it seem that he was too pugnacious, he told Lessig at one point that he was going to hug him. He was generous with historical allusions, quoting Immanuel Kant, Samuel Johnson, and William of Occam. Several times, he invoked Lyndon Johnson, and his own experience in the White House. He mentioned that he had recently been "lacerated" in hearings before the Senate Commerce Committee (following the F.T.C. report on sex and violence in movies), and he was reminded that "whenever L.B.J. confronted one of these moments when he was being compared unfavorably with Caligula, he would say, 'O.K., boys, it's getting hot out there, we're gonna all hunker down like a jackass in a hailstorm and wait for the wind to stop blowing.' That's how I'm feeling about the Senate Commerce Committee and the Congress and now the Harvard Law School, where Larry Lessig is going to demolish me and shred me up pretty good."

But if he was self-deprecating he was also noticeably eager to assure this young audience of technophiles that he was no anachronism. He announced that he was setting up a new digital-strategy department at the M.P.A.A., and that within a year its member companies would be offering movies online, at "reasonable" prices—thus preventing, he hopes, a Napster-like situation in the film industry. "I've talked with the smartest people in cyberspace all over this country. I sit on the board of two Internet companies where my fellow board members range in age from twenty-three to thirty. And I'm learning a whole new patois, a whole new language, and I'm learning a lot!" His exposure to this radically changed world, however, had not caused him to alter his signature approach. As he expressed it, alluding to William of Occam, "Keep the bloody thing simple." And, he continued, "This is very simple. This is about private property, intellectual property. . . . Because of this technological legerdemain called the Internet . . . people find it easy to steal."

Lessig granted that there is indeed some "stealing" that he would not defend. And he stipulated that authors have an important interest in protecting their copyrights. But, he insisted, "There is a big difference between perfect control and the right to be paid." Lessig proceeded to outline a high-minded and complex rebuttal, citing the history of copyright law and the importance of "fair use" doctrine, which allows some liberties to be taken with copyright. He argued that the media-entertainment industry was attempting to achieve monopolistic control of "content" and its distribution in cyberspace, and he decried the provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (lobbied for vigorously by Valenti and passed in 1998), which make it a crime to circumvent any technologies intended to protect copyrighted material in cyberspace, or even to reveal how to do so. More broadly, Lessig argued that it is crucial to strike a balance between private intellectual property and the public's constitutionally mandated interest in a rich public domain—a domain more vital than ever in the new digital environment. Valenti, however, had little interest in that theoretical give-and-take. He stuck resolutely to the real world: the existing law (recent cases have been decided consistently in favor of the copyright holders and against the putative infringers), the cost of making movies, the risk to the producers of having their products copied and thrown up on the Internet, the importance of intellectual property to the economy, as America's greatest trade export. At one point, the moderator commented that Valenti and Lessig were "ships passing in the night." But it was plainly Valenti's aim never to engage, and most of the time he evaded rather deftly.

This ideological war over the rights to digital content, which could have been Valenti's undoing (some in Hollywood had wondered if he would be able to master its lexicon and intricacies at this late stage in his career), may instead have strengthened his hold at the M.P.A.A. Valenti does seem antiquated at times, preaching to online enthusiasts who might be his grandchildren about misbehavior in cyberspace. But these sermons are mere sidelights. What the M.P.A.A. cares about is how Valenti performs in Washington, not in Cambridge; and in Washington Valenti has done very well for his bosses. He has taken an amorphous and extremely complicated subject, translated it into simple, very human terms, and got the legislation that the companies wanted: the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. In the process, he has succeeded, as usual, in transforming the issue, so that it is widely perceived as involving not Hollywood's commercial interests but, rather, the public good.

While his night at Harvard didn't matter much to the M.P.A.A., it did to Valenti. If he had scored no points against Lessig and won no converts in this audience, he barely seemed to notice. He was onstage, the crowd was attentive, he got some laughs. He was relishing the challenge, he told me later, of being "Daniel in the lion's den." So when the moderator declared the event over, Valenti cut in. Turning to the audience, he declared, "I am astonished beyond my comprehension that so many really bright people would sit here from seven o'clock to nine o'clock. I'm really amazed by that. I don't know what that signifies, to be honest, except that maybe this is a lousy night to do anything in Harvard. But I'm stunned by it, and, as a matter of fact," he said, in a suddenly unpostured moment, gazing out at the crowd, "I'm rather joyful about it." ♦



"Bingo! I have bingo, Your Excellency. My entire people have bingo."

LETTER FROM INDONESIA

SOLDIERS AND SPICE

Why the Dutch traded Manhattan for a speck of rock in the South Pacific.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

In 1502, a Bolognese traveller named Ludovico di Varthema left Venice for the East, returning six years later. The book that he wrote about his travels, published in Rome in 1510, and translated into several languages, attracted considerable attention in Europe, both among readers interested in God—Varthema was the first European to visit the holy places of Islam—and among those interested in mammon. Varthema was also the first Westerner to describe nutmeg trees, which he saw growing in the Bandas, a tiny archipelago of nine islands about a thousand miles east of Java. The Bandas were just one small part of the region that used to be called the Spice Islands (and are now called the Moluccas), but they were the only islands in the world on which round nutmeg grew.

The crucial role that nutmeg played in early colonial history is hard to reconcile with the dusty tin of spice most Americans take out of the rack at the end of the year to garnish their eggnog, but at one time nutmeg was the most valuable commodity in the world, after silver and gold. In addition to preserving and flavoring food, nutmeg was believed to be a soporific, an emetic, a prophylactic against plague, and a hallucinogen. The great naval powers of Europe—the Portuguese, Dutch, English, and Spanish—all competed for control of the trade in nutmeg and mace (the vermillion-colored membrane that encases the nut), as well as in pepper, cinnamon, and cloves; the profits from these spices could be used to finance an Eastern empire. In the early seventeenth century, ten pounds of nutmeg cost less than an English penny in the Banda Islands, and sold for £2.10 in Europe, a markup of sixty thousand per cent. A house that smelled of nutmeg smelled like money. (Connecticut, in an early example of putting its best foot forward, called itself the Nutmeg State, although no nutmegs have ever grown within two thousand miles of there.)

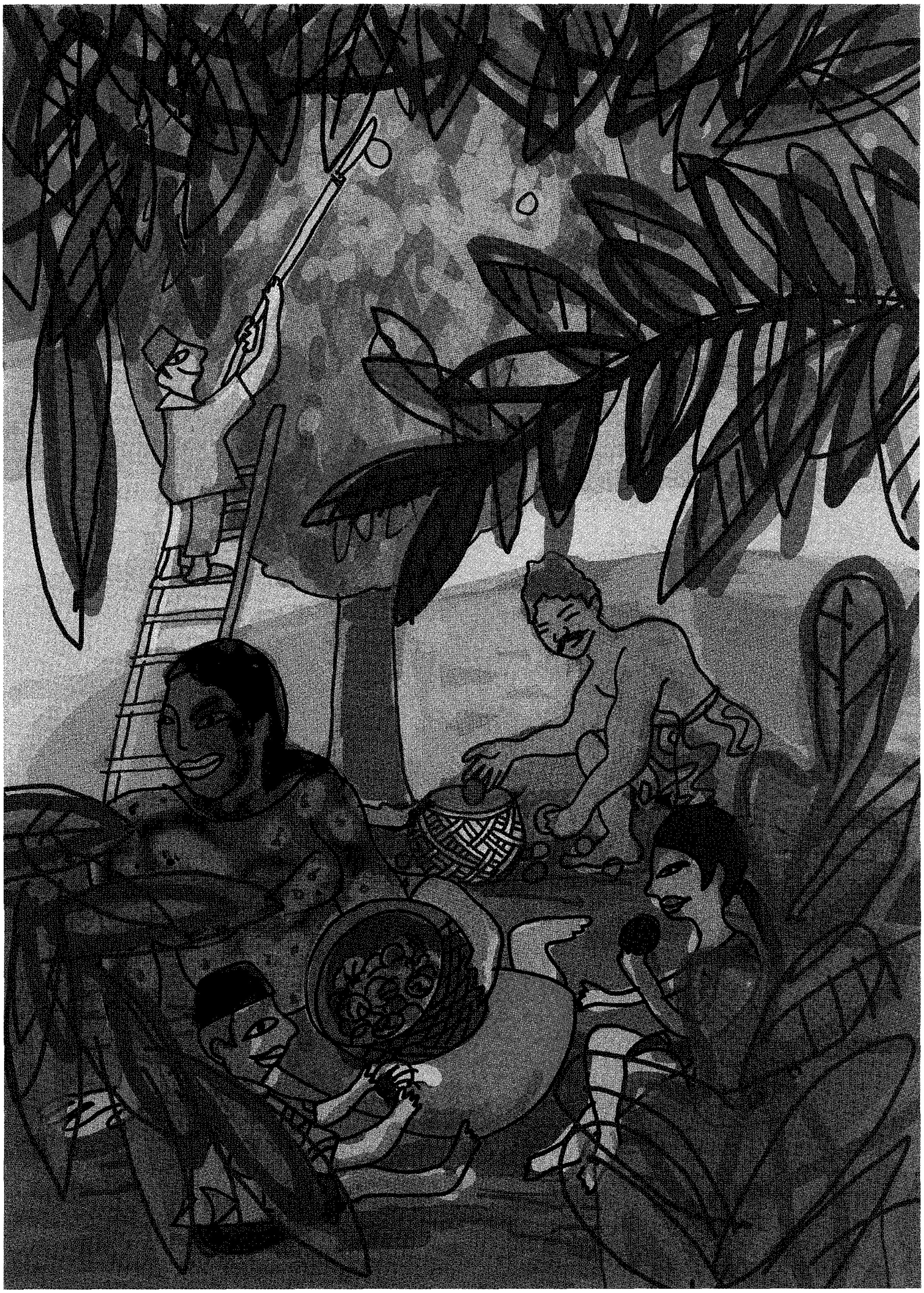
During the Middle Ages, Chinese, Arab, and Malay traders brought nutmeg from the Far East to the Persian Gulf, where camels packed it through Arabia to the Levant, and ships carried it across the Mediterranean Sea to Venice. After the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, in 1453, the overland spice road closed, and European navigators began searching for a sea route to the Spice Islands. When Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and entered the Indian Ocean, in 1498, he was looking for the "spiceries." Christopher Columbus sailed in the other direction, with similar hopes, but found the New World in his way.

Varthema's account of the "open roses" he had seen in the Banda Islands was published in time to be read by Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese admiral who staked the first European claim in the area by seizing the principal trading port, Malacca, from the local sultan, Mahmud, in 1511. Afonso quickly dispatched a crew of explorers in the direction in which he believed the Bandas lay. When the sailors were within ten miles of the islands, they claimed they could smell nutmeg on the wind. Upon arriving, the crew loaded the ships' holds with nutmeg and mace—the golden fruit—carried the cargo back to Seville, and sold it for a fortune.

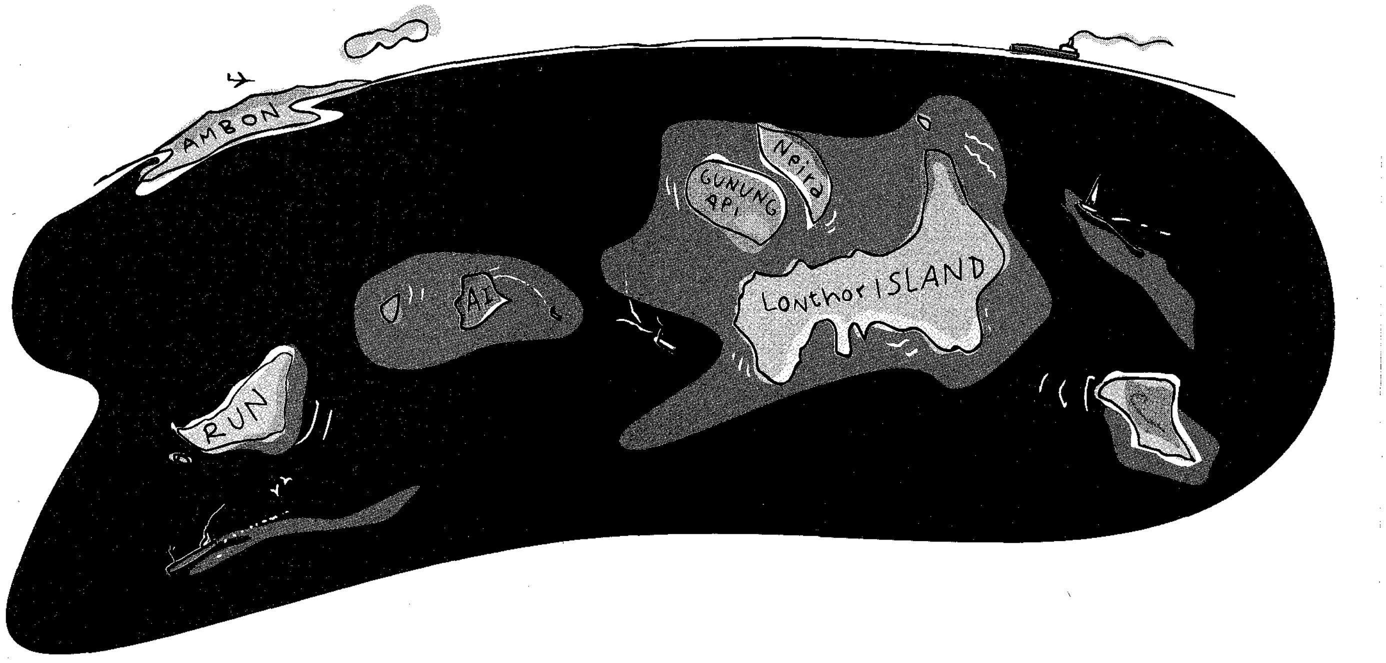
Everyone knows the story of the Dutchman Peter Minuit, who, in 1626, supposedly bought Manhattan from its Native American inhabitants for twenty-four dollars' worth of beads and trinkets—the first of the great New York swindles. The Treaty of Breda, in 1667, under which Holland traded New Amsterdam, as the Dutch called Manhattan, to the English for Pulau Run, one of the Bandas, is less familiar. I learned about the exchange from my tenth-grade history teacher, who turned European diplomacy into a classroom game: whoever finagled the trade of Manhattan for that tiny hunk of nutmeg-covered coral rock won first prize. I was reminded of Run recently by "Nathaniel's Nutmeg," a book by Giles Milton, which vividly narrates the entanglements between the Dutch and the British that led up to the treaty. My wife's brother is a political officer with the United States Embassy in Jakarta, and we had been talking about visiting Indonesia someday. This spring, four hundred and ninety-nine years after Varthema's departure, I went to smell the nutmeg for myself.

We arrived in Jakarta in late April, just ahead of twenty thousand Muslims, who were coming to the capital to show their allegiance to the country's embattled President, Abdurrahman Wahid. A reformer who had become President only nineteen months earlier, Wahid was in the process of being impeached for incompetence by the country's national assembly; he had turned out to be a much better critic of the establishment than a leader of it. The Jakarta *Post* carried pictures of demonstrations in East Java, Wahid's stronghold, where the most fanatic of his supporters, the "suicide squads," were reported to be in training. One photograph showed a man being stabbed, another shot—both, apparently, no worse for the experience, thanks to their "magical powers." It was the beginning of the endgame for Wahid, a three-month drama that concluded two weeks ago, with Wahid's dismissal and the elevation of the Vice-President, Megawati Sukarnoputri, to the Presidency of the republic.

Pulau Run is too small to appear in any of the world atlases I had consulted back in New York, but, according to a guidebook, the National Museum in Jakarta owned several large relief maps of Indonesia, and I thought they might give me a better idea of where I wanted to go. The three-mile car trip to the museum lasted more than an hour. The traffic was



"This is our heritage," the headman said. "Six thousand of the Bandanese died because of this nutmeg." Illustrations by Mariscal.



terrible, and the heat and the air pollution make walking impossible. Much of the old colonial city has been torn down; what we could see from the car was mostly the aftermath of colonialism, slums right next to ostentatious malls and skyscrapers built with money borrowed primarily from the West (money that is now contributing to Indonesia's huge debt, which is roughly equal to its gross national product). Near the museum, we discovered the reason for the delay: yet another "demo," as the Indonesians say. This one called on the central government to allow Aceh, a region in Sumatra where fierce separatist fighting has occurred, to secede from the union.

The maps were indeed impressive, and they illustrated the challenge of holding together a nation of such fragmented geography. Indonesia stretches from the northern tip of Sumatra to the eastern edge of Irian Jaya, some three thousand miles, about the distance from London to Baghdad. Seventy per cent of the nation is water. There are several very big islands (Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi, and parts of Irian Jaya and Kalimantan), a half dozen or so medium-sized ones (including Bali, Lombok, Timor, and Flores), and more than thirteen thousand small islands, half of which are uninhabited. Many of the larger islands have their own cultural, and sometimes ethnic, identity: Java is heavily Muslim, Bali is Hindu, Flores is Christian. Two hundred and ten million people live in Indonesia, making it the fourth most populous nation in the world. The only modern nation with a comparable multitude of people, cultures, languages, religions, and ethnicities was the Soviet Union, and the U.S.S.R. achieved unity through invasion and occupation, and sustained it for only seventy years.

I found the Banda Islands, a few tiny specks in the midst of the South Pacific Ocean, but I couldn't distinguish Pulau Run, and I asked the Indonesian woman who was leading our small group whether she had heard of it.

"It's the island that the English traded to the Dutch for Manhattan," I said.

"Yes, I have heard that story," she replied, "but I don't believe it."

"But it's a fact," I protested. "It's history."

"But who were the Dutch and the English to trade islands that didn't belong to them in the first place?"

True, but if justice alone were the standard by which Indonesian history was told, large chunks of the past five hundred years would have to be erased. The Portuguese were the first European power in Indonesia, occupying the islands from 1511 until the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the Dutch took over. Early in the seventeenth century, the English managed to claim and hold two of the Banda Islands, Ai and Run, two of the earliest colonies in what would one day be the British Empire. (King James I's full title was King of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Puloway, and Puloroon.) But, with the Treaty of Breda, the English left their holdings in the Bandas to the Dutch, and concentrated their regional interests in the Malay Peninsula. Except for two brief periods of British occupation at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Dutch controlled most of the islands that now make up Indonesia until 1945.

The British claimed territories, and administered them like miniature versions of the mother country. The Dutch claimed commodities—chiefly spices but also coffee, tea, and teak—and governed in a way that would maximize profits. The Dutch East India Company (known as the V.O.C.) was the ruling authority, and its typical approach was to monopolize trade, fix prices, and enslave or remove the local population. In the Bandas, a ruthless Dutch governor-general named Jan Pieterszoon Coen killed forty-four of the *orang kayas*, or traditional chiefs, in 1621, transported many of the native Bandanese off the islands, and brought in *perkeniers*, or planters, to run the nutmeg plantations.

The Dutch resisted Indonesian independence when it was declared, in 1945, and fought until 1949 to get their colonies back. When Holland finally accepted the inevitability of an independent Indonesia, it proposed that the new nation adopt a federal system—a United States of Indonesia—in which different regions of the country would have sovereignty, delegating certain powers to the federal government. But Sukarno, who became the first President of the independent nation, abandoned federalism, in part because he didn't trust the Dutch—to many Indonesians, federalism is merely the old Dutch policy of divide and rule—and in part because he believed that such a physically decentralized country required a highly centralized government to unify it. He divided the nation into provinces, each with its own governor, but the provinces were limited in their ability to make laws and levy taxes, and they couldn't police themselves. Even mineral-rich provinces on the perimeter of the nation, such as Irian Jaya or Aceh, were required to send all their revenues to the central government in Jakarta, which then decided how much to give back. (In 2000, new laws went into effect that allowed resource-rich provinces to keep a percentage of their production.) This system of government may have been necessary to unite the new nation, but it also created one of the biggest political problems in the country today, which is the provinces' desire for greater autonomy. B. J. Habibie, who preceded Wahid, set in motion legislation designed to shift power out of Jakarta and into the provinces, and Wahid continued those policies. Now Megawati, Sukarno's fifty-four-year-old daughter, may try to slow that decentralization process, and move Indonesia closer to the centralized state that her father had in mind.

Sukarno, a famous womanizer, married numerous times (some scholars say he had as many as nine wives); he left Megawati's mother, Fatmawati, when Mega was young. He was a charismatic leader who presented himself as the quintessential Indonesian, the man in whom all the inconsistencies and contradictions of the country were blended. His greatest achievement was to make the Sumatrans and Javanese and Timorese and Balinese proud to call themselves Indonesians. He created a national ideology (*Pancasila*) founded on five common principles that the people of all the islands are supposed to share: faith in God, civility, unity, representative government, and social justice. He also helped to promote the national language, Bahasa Indonesia.

In 1966, Sukarno was replaced by Suharto, the Army general who became Indonesia's second President. Suharto ruled not by personality but by military force, using a powerful and privileged Army to hold the country together, a vast and deeply corrupt system of patronage to buy the support of the élite, and a booming economy to help salve the consequent loss of regional autonomy and personal liberty. The boom ended in the Asian Crisis of 1997—the bursting of the "emerging Asian markets" bubble, which was a favorite source of foreign investment in the nineties. In May, 1998, the Army opened fire on a group of demonstrators, killing six students, and in the widespread rioting that followed Suharto resigned. (The former President is currently being prosecuted for corruption but is too feeble to stand trial; his notorious son, Tommy Suharto, is on the lam somewhere in Indonesia, having been sentenced to prison for eighteen months on corruption charges. Two weeks ago, the judge who sentenced Tommy was assassinated.)

After a brief interregnum under Habibie, a gifted technocrat with little talent for politics, Wahid, who had been a revered cleric (the "Muslim Pope," as one journalist called him), became President in 1999, promising to reform the country's political and economic institutions and bring the leaders of the Suharto regime to justice. But all the separatist movements and ethnic conflicts that had been suppressed by force under Suharto began to rise to the surface. Aceh, Irian Jaya, and Central Kalimantan have seen the worst fighting; in Kalimantan, the indigenous Dayak people have been killing immigrants from the overcrowded island of Madura (and resuming the traditional Dayak practice of taking their enemies' heads). This instability weakened the currency and the Indonesian stock market, and contributed to the ouster of Wahid. Most Indonesians don't want to return to the military rule of Suharto, but they do want a leader who can unite them, as Sukarno did and the erratic Wahid did not. They see that potential in their new President. Megawati has so far demonstrated few, if any, of her father's leadership qualities (indeed, her political strategy, which is to let everyone else do the talking, and then act, is more like that of her father's usurper, Suharto), but by remaining so aloof she has allowed people to invest her with whatever qualities they want to believe she possesses. Her father proved, in the end, to be a better nationalist than a democrat; whether Mega inherited his megalomania remains to be seen.

In our second week in Jakarta, we went to a dinner party given by Tamalia Alisjahbana, whose father was a celebrated Indonesian writer. Tamalia keeps a salon in the capital, where members of the political, social, and intellectual élite meet. Spice was the theme for this evening—the dinner table was strewn with nutmeg, cloves, and mace—and Tamalia had invited, as the guest of honor, a man who, she said, could get me to Pulau Run, if anyone could: the current *orang kaya* of the Banda Islands, Des Alwi.

Dinner parties in Jakarta run on *jam karet*, or "rubber time," a schedule that expands to include the accidental nature of everyday life in this city of eleven million. We arrived half an hour late—early by Indonesian standards—because we thought some of the other *bule* (white faces) might not be on rubber time. Already there were three Portuguese academics who had been visiting East Timor, a former colony of Portugal; another Portuguese expat, from the embassy in Jakarta; and a German Jesuit priest, the author of a guidebook to Jakarta.

We were sipping the nutmeg-flavored cordials that Tamalia had provided—the taste was like Coca-Cola without the fizz—when Des Alwi, a heavyset older man with gray hair, caramel-colored skin, and a rolling walk came in with his daughter Tanya, "the original spice girl," as she introduced herself. Des promptly installed himself in a low chair, watching with a sleepy, shrewd expression as the rest of us conversed. He was wearing a navy-blue military-style jacket, with breast pockets and epaulettes, and matching pants. In the Bandas, Des lives like an English country baronet, except that the fish are

"Please translate my comment into a hand gesture."

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his hounds and the coral is his hunt, and when he returns from his forays into his watery estate one of his men kneels at his feet and strips off the master's aqua socks rather than his riding boots. In Jakarta, where Des spends much of his time, he is a businessman, wheeling and dealing in the marble hotel lobbies downtown.

There are seven *orang kayas* in the Bandas, each with separate authority on his respective island; Des is the overall leader. He inherited his position from his mother's father. (In the Bandas, the chain of succession passes through the females of one generation to the males of the next, a system begun in the seventeenth century after the Dutch governors started killing the sons of the *orang kayas*.) Like all Bandanese, Des is a mixture of other ethnicities, in his case Javanese, Sumatran, Moroccan, and Chinese. His mother's father, Said Baadilla, was known as the Pearl King of the Aru Sea (he once gave a pearl "as big as a pigeon's egg," Tamalia told me, to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands) and was married to a Javanese princess. Baadilla had a fleet of forty pearl schooners, one of which was captained by the man who became Des's father. His father's father, Prince Umar of Palembang, a Sumatran, became the head of the powerful Sultan of Ternate's cavalry in the Spice Islands. In the nineteen-thirties, mother-of-pearl was replaced by Bakelite as the preferred material in high-quality buttons, and this invention, combined with the worldwide Depression, helped drive Des's maternal grandfather into bankruptcy.

Des's own life is intertwined with many of the major events in the creation of Indonesia, and is almost as unlikely. When he was eight, in 1936, he was swimming off the pier in the harbor at Banda Neira, the most heavily populated of the Banda Islands, when a Dutch ship pulled up to the dock and two Indonesians in tropical white suits were escorted off. The Indonesians asked the Dutch captain if he would help with their luggage, but he answered, "Let the Reds carry their own bags." Des clambered out of the water, and one of the men asked him if he knew where to find Dr. Tjipto Mangunkusumo, a political exile who had been confined to the Bandas. Des said he believed the man lived on the other side of Neira, but he added that there was another exile living close by, and he took the men there.

Later, when the newcomers were settled in a house in town, they saw Des passing by on his way to school, and called him in to thank him. Only then did he learn that they were Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir, two of the three founding fathers of the soon-to-be-independent state. (The third, Sukarno, had been exiled to another remote island.) The Dutch had sent them to the Bandas, by this time an isolated backwater; but, as it turned out, the cradle of Dutch colonial power was to be the cradle of Indonesian nationalism. Des became a kind of adopted son to Sjahrir, who taught him Dutch and English. While Des played, Hatta and Sjahrir developed some of the core principles of Indonesian independence.

In 1942, the Japanese seized Indonesia from the Dutch. Sjahrir and Hatta went to Jakarta. Many Indonesians initially welcomed the Japanese, believing that Japan would be more open to Indonesian independence than Holland had been. Des, now fourteen, took a boat to Ambon—the capital of the Moluccas—and eventually got to Jakarta, where he joined Hatta and Sjahrir in their underground efforts to promote independence. In 1945, he was wounded in the leg by a mortar while fighting in Surabaya, a city in East Java. Shortly afterward, Sjahrir arranged for Des to attend school in London, where he received a degree in radio communications; one of his classmates was Tunku Abdul Rahman, who later became the first prime minister of Malaysia. When Des returned, he became a diplomat for the newly formed Republic of Indonesia, serving as a chargé d'affaires in Switzerland, Germany, the Philippines, and Malaysia, and acting as Sukarno's diplomatic protocol officer during his European tour of 1954-55.

In the late nineteen-fifties, Sukarno dissolved the national assembly and introduced Guided Democracy, a system of government that he once explained by saying, "O.K., now, my dear brothers, it is like this, and I hope you agree." Around the same time, Des, who was now married, with young children, joined a number of other Indonesians in the Permesta Rebellion, which was, in part, an attempt to force Sukarno to distance himself from the P.K.I., Indonesia's Communist Party. The rebellion failed, and Des left Indonesia for Kuala Lumpur, in Malaysia, where he remained with his family. In the mid-sixties, Sukarno provoked a disastrous confrontation with Malaysia, and Des was called back to Indonesia to help mediate between the two countries. In the years that followed, he used his political connections to secure the Volvo dealership in Jakarta, and became adept in the ways of what Indonesians call "KKN"—corruption, collusion, and nepotism, which was how business was done during the Suharto era, and, for the most part, still is.

In 1971, he wrote and produced a film, starring his handicapped son, called "The Grandson," a mixture of his own life and Nicholas Nickleby's—a poor orphan boy is beset by hardships until he is discovered to have a rich grandmother living in Banda. The film was a box-office smash, and Des used the money to convert his grandfather's former pearl-fishery warehouse in Banda into a hotel, and began to promote the Banda Islands as a tourist destination, with considerable success. He also established a factory in Malaysia to assemble transistor radios. In the early eighties, Des impressed Suharto with his agricultural ability by introducing a cocoa plant from Malaysia, which dramatically increased Indonesian cocoa production. This success led to Suharto's interest in nutmeg, and in 1995 Des obtained a promise from the Indonesian government to invest two million dollars to revive nutmeg production in the Bandas. He had been cultivating nutmeg since 1997, and had come to Tamalia's party to talk about his progress.

Dinner was served. Des was quiet at first, except to comment favorably on the tamarind-seed flavoring in the tuna—a Banda touch. His English is good, but he is partial to idioms, and needs to pause to remember them. ("Tamalia, the tuna is—how do you call it?—finger-lickin' good.") But when he had finished his *sagu* pudding, a tapioca-like dessert made from palm fibre, he picked up one of the nutmegs from the table, held it up for all to see, and shook it. The nutmeg could be heard rattling around inside the polished outer casing.

"Did you know," Des began, "that nutmeg was the first global commodity? Long before sneakers, there was nutmeg. Even today, it is hard to find a flavoring so widely spread throughout the world. The Chinese use nutmeg as a preservative in sausage. The Japanese put it in fish curry. In India, it is in the Mogul dishes. Germans enjoy it in wurst and on sauerkraut. The Dutch sprinkle it on fish and mashed potatoes and put it inside—what do you call them?—croquettes. And, of course, nutmeg is the secret ingredient in Coke."

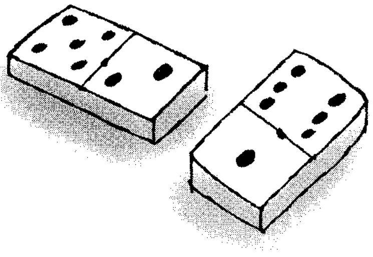
Was it true that the world's first global commodity was an agent in Coke, a symbol of twenty-first-century globalism? Coca-Cola will neither confirm nor deny this. But, according to Des, Coke is the biggest consumer of nutmeg in the world.

"The proportion of nutmeg to the other ingredients is eight-tenths of one per cent," Des declared. "The company has written me two letters, asking for Banda nutmegs." He rattled the nut again. "So you see, it's like this: the world might be able to go on without nutmeg, but it isn't the same world with it."

He went on to say that only a fraction of the world's nutmeg still came from the Bandas, and that the spice was in danger of disappearing from the islands altogether. "And this is our heritage. Six thousand of the Bandanese died because of this nutmeg." Several of the Westerners glanced down at the table. "So this is what I have decided to do with my life, what remains of it—to save Banda's nutmeg."

After dinner, we returned to the living room to watch some video footage Des had shot of his nutmeg plantation in Banda. He made a peculiar calling sound—Oooo, Oooo—the sound, I later learned, nutmeg workers use to call each other in the jungle (it penetrates the heavy foliage), and several of his men hustled in from outside and set up the VCR. (Fiddling with VCRs is beneath the dignity of an *orang kaya*.) After about half an hour, someone could be heard snoring in the dark; the Jesuit historian had fallen asleep.

Tamalia said, "Why don't we fast-forward a bit, Des?" No response. "Too much nutmeg, Des." Des took umbrage at this remark. "Tamalia," he said indignantly, "you can never have too much nutmeg."



Des promised to take me with him the next time he went to the Banda Islands, toward the end of May. In the weeks that followed, this plan became more elaborate, as a Dutch delegation joined the expedition, led by Holland's ambassador to Indonesia, Baron Schelto van Heemstra, a stocky, fair-haired man in his fifties. Last year, Holland helped Indonesia in its efforts to nominate Banda as a World Heritage site, which would allow it to receive money provided by a UNESCO-sponsored program. Des hopes that Banda's application will be approved in 2002.

On the flight to Ambon, where we would spend the night before leaving for the Bandas, Des was in very good humor. He talked of holding a ceremony on Pulau Run to cancel the old trade for New Amsterdam.

"Then I will become King of Manhattan. John, what do you think, it's a good idea, no? I am eying the United Nations building." He said he had sent a telegram to Mayor Giuliani, proposing Pulau Run as Manhattan's sister island, but so far he had received no reply.

Ambon is a port city in the middle of the Moluccas, and was the center of the spice trade for centuries. For the past two and a half years, the city has been the site of intermittent fighting between Christians and Muslims. Facts in Indonesia tend to be debatable, whether they are facts about history or facts about what happened last night. As best as can be determined, part of the trouble in Ambon started when Bugi migrants from Sulawesi arrived in Ambon looking for work. Tensions rose between the Christians in Ambon and the Buginese, who are predominantly Muslim, and the spark came in January of 1999, when a Bugi migrant apparently demanded money at knifepoint from a Christian minibus driver. A quarrel ensued, machetes were produced, and within two months more than a hundred and fifty people were dead, and thousands had been left homeless. Many churches and mosques were burned. Last year, much of Pattimura University, which had one of the leading marine-science research centers in the world, was destroyed. Laskar Jihad, Indonesia's homegrown fundamentalist Islamic movement, has been using the events in Ambon to recruit followers, sending them out to the Moluccas to fight the Christians.

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, but it is not a Muslim state. Indonesians have always prided themselves on religious tolerance—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity have all flourished in the islands over the centuries, and each religion has been more or less peacefully absorbed into the pantheist and mystical practices that remain popular in the villages, especially on Java. But without censorship and military rule to sustain the myth of the big, happy Indonesian family, fault lines are beginning to appear throughout the society. To those who are pessimistic about Indonesia's future, the religious conflict in Ambon offers a taste of what the whole nation could be like one day. Thirty-two years of Suharto's authoritarian rule, which included the massacre of an estimated half-million alleged Communists in 1965-66—an act of twentieth-century mass murder that is still rarely discussed in public—created a reservoir of grievances that Indonesians have only just begun to express.

Ambon had been relatively quiet in the month prior to my visit, and I thought the Ambassador's presence would provide extra security. As it turned out, I was wrong.

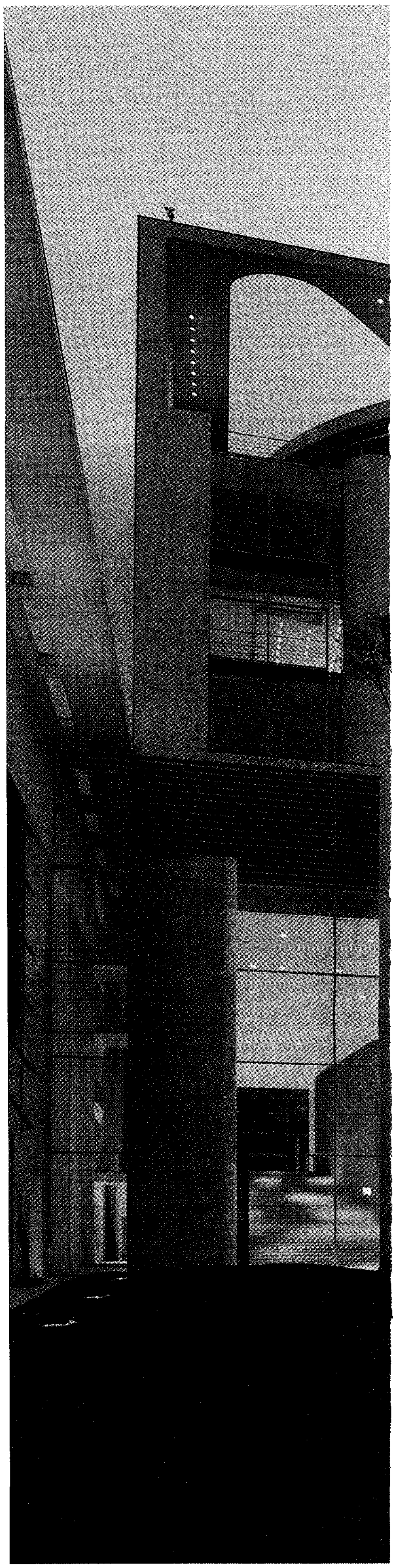
That night, the Ambassador had organized a kind of plenary session in a hotel called Amans, in Mardika, a border area in Ambon between Muslim and Christian neighborhoods. The Dutch were driven from their hotel in a big tour bus, with an Army escort. The guests, many of whom had been in the Balkans in the mid-nineties, consisted of about thirty relief workers from different aid groups now serving in Ambon. (Des, who was staying in a hotel in a Muslim part of Ambon, did not attend.) The Ambassador, a man of very deliberate movements—he speaks slowly, gestures slowly, and even blinks slowly, in a way that conveys gravitas—began the evening by welcoming everyone to the dinner, saying that he had come to Ambon to learn and to help. During dinner, he and his staff went from table to table, asking the guests for their opinions on the

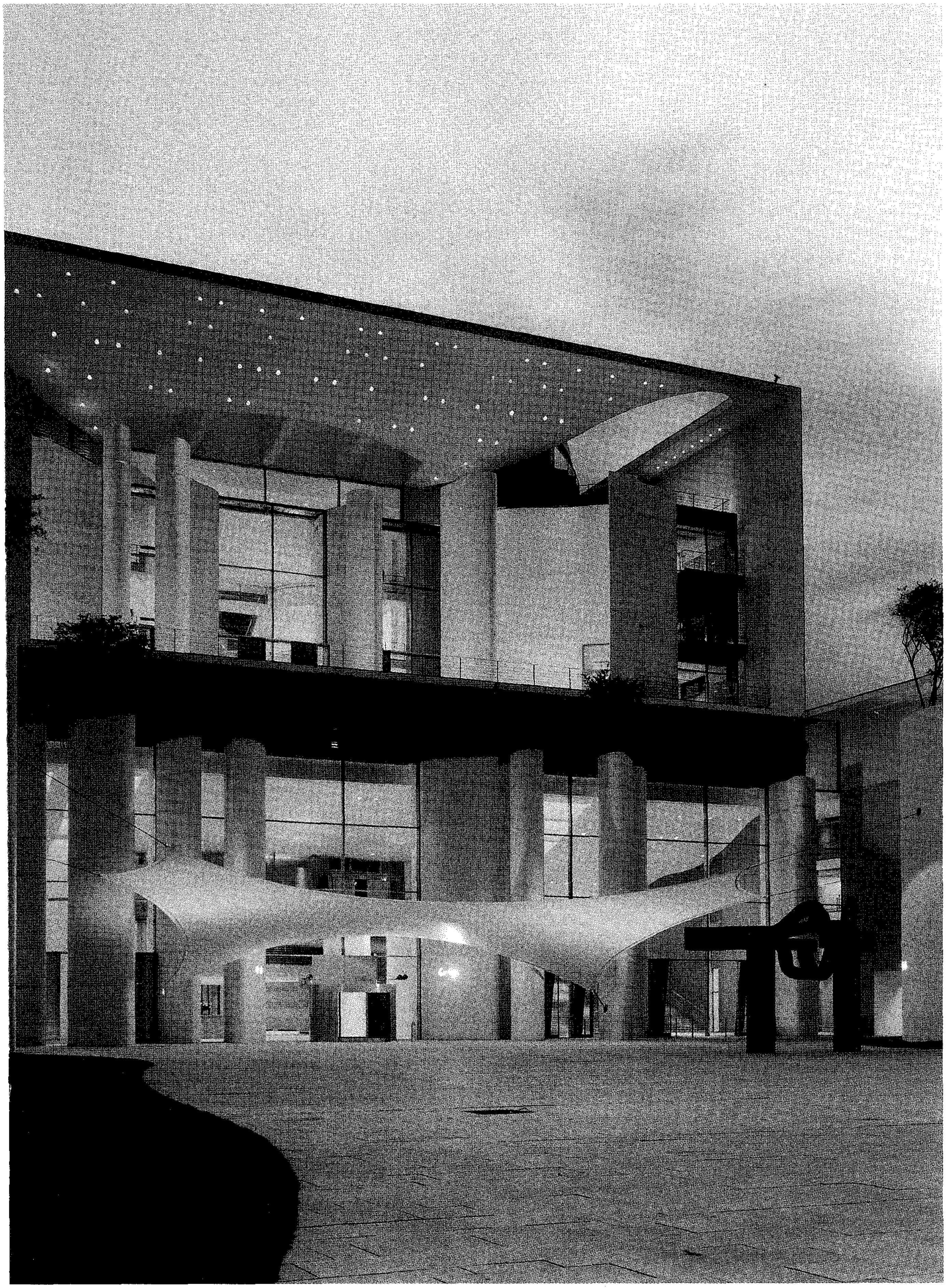
SHOWCASE BY
ROBERT POLIDORI

DAS BIG HAUS

The new chancellery in Berlin is both bombastic and giddy. It has swoops and curves and a kind of retro-modern élan, combining the gargantuan sleekness of nineteen-sixties American architecture with surrealistic touches like trees on top of columns, as if the Albany Mall had been redone by Philippe Starck. The building houses the offices of the executive branch of the German government and includes a top-floor apartment for the chancellor. It is eight times as large as the White House, and is surely the most ambitious piece of new architecture in the capital. (The glass-domed Reichstag, by Norman Foster, is a renovation of a nineteenth-century building.) The chancellery architects, Axel Schultes and Charlotte Frank, won a competition for the commission in 1995. The other finalist, the architectural firm Krüger-Schuberth-Vandreike, had proposed a more formal, colonnaded building that reminded many people of the deadening classicism of Albert Speer. Nevertheless, the competition jury couldn't decide between the two entries, and Helmut Kohl had a huge model of each building placed in his office in Bonn, where he pondered the matter for six weeks. When he announced that he had selected the Schultes-and-Frank plan, he said it was because it "radiates confidence, modesty and dignity." Alas, almost no one seems to feel that the building as finally constructed is any of those things. The new chancellery in Berlin may not be as dreary as the last one, a quarter-mile-long box of stone by Speer, but it is hardly more modest or more dignified. A new chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, moved into the building in May, and he says it is simply too big.

—*Paul Goldberger*





causes of the violence, but no consensus was reached. Some people talked about the socio-economic disparities between Christians and Muslims; others spoke about the Army, which is seen to have a vested interest in provoking and prolonging the unrest, because this proves that the provinces can't manage without it.

At around nine-thirty, the Ambassador stood up and said that we should leave in order to beat the ten-o'clock curfew. As we were walking to the bus, a bomb went off a few streets away, the soldiers took cover, and gunfire erupted. Then the lights went out, both in the hotel and on the street. We retreated to the covered parking lot behind the hotel, where some racily clad women from the hotel's karaoke bar joined us. After about ten minutes, the lights came on again. More bombs exploded. Many of these bombs are made by children, and most of the casualties are the bomb-makers themselves.

Finally, it began to rain hard and the explosions stopped. We climbed aboard the bus with about half a dozen soldiers and drove the short distance back to the hotel. Intermittent explosions and gunfire continued until dawn.

The following morning, the Ambonese went about their business as though nothing had happened. People headed toward the market with umbrellas; boys were selling a daily newspaper with headlines that read "TRAGEDI MALUKU"—the Moluccan Tragedy; armed soldiers squatted under the palm trees, smoking clove cigarettes; and rickshaw drivers cycled slowly past the hotel, looking in vain for fares.

Seven people were dead, all Christian. Everyone was killed during the period when the lights went out—black-clad assassins with standard Army-issue weapons had broken into homes close to the hotel we were dining in, killed the occupants, and set the houses on fire.

The Ambassador's party had intended to fly to the Bandas in a small military aircraft, but the Army general in charge of Ambon declared that the situation was too dangerous for planes to take off. The new plan was to proceed to the islands on board the Rinjani, one of two big German-built passenger boats that travel between Surabaya and Irian Jaya, stopping at islands in between. But how to get the Ambassador safely from his hotel in a Christian neighborhood to the Muslim-controlled pier where the big ships docked? At one point, the plan was to take a speedboat from the Christian part of the harbor and board the liner at sea, but this was scrapped because the speedboat drivers, who were Christians, couldn't pull up alongside a Muslim boat.

Around noon, a telephone call came from the assistant governor of Ambon, who said the Army could no longer guarantee the Ambassador's safety, and that he should return to Jakarta immediately. Soldiers were already beginning to take up defensive positions outside in the street, preparing for the reprisals that were expected that night.

The news that the Ambassador wouldn't be coming to Banda after all enraged Des. "It is all political!" he told me later. "The assistant governor is only jealous because the Dutch want to go to Banda, where the situation is so much better than Ambon!" But the Dutch were leaving, and the best Des could do was me.

Victoria Roberts

"You never tell me anything. Keep up the good work."

"Where are you going?" Indonesians ask travellers they encounter, not "Where are you from?," as Americans ask. This is partly in the hope that you will employ their assistance in getting to wherever you are going, but it's also because people always seem to be going somewhere else in Indonesia. On the Rinjani were former refugees returning to Irian Jaya, and new refugees fleeing the violence in Ambon, taking everything with them—their sewing tables and their beds, sometimes with invalid parents atop them—crowded into the steerage berths or sleeping out on the open deck in the rain.

I went out onto the deck. The daylight was fading quickly, as it does in the Tropics, and land and sea were dissolving into a single shade of Conradian gray. I tried to picture the map I had seen in the museum and work out where we were, but the country's geography is hard to visualize. Land takes on the characteristics of a people—the building style, the names of roads, the advertising—but the sea is the same everywhere, and it is a fragile weld. In the absence of a national landscape, one must rely on the ideals of nationalism, which one encounters constantly in Indonesia's newspapers, in the discourse of its politicians, and in the conversations of ordinary people. But Indonesia's nationalism often seems to be at odds with its geography (as it was designed to be), and in the long run the sea may prove to be the more powerful force.

On the boat, I met a man named Alan, who owned a hotel somewhere near Des's hotel, on the main island of Banda Neira. He talked gloomily of the troubles in Ambon, and of how they had destroyed his business. "Now no one comes to my hotel anymore. We used to have people from all over who came for the diving, but now all the embassies post notices warning people not to come. And Banda is not bad! Banda is peaceful! I think if only the travel guides would come back and see, they would say Banda is O.K., but they don't come."

The Banda Islands form one district within the province of the Moluccas. Until January of this year, the provincial governments had the authority to appoint the *bupati*, or heads of the districts, but a recent change in the laws, giving districts the power to choose their own leaders (partly as a way of countering the fear that the newly empowered provinces will decide to secede from Indonesia, as East Timor did two years ago), has disrupted the old hierarchy, and the relationship between Ambon and the Bandas reflects that. Flights to the Banda Islands used to go through Ambon, which gave Ambon a share of the tourist dollars, but because of the unrest air service has been suspended. The Bandas are trying to get the routing changed, so that tourists can fly directly from other provinces. But Ambon hasn't relinquished its authority, even though that relationship has all but destroyed the islands' tourist economy.

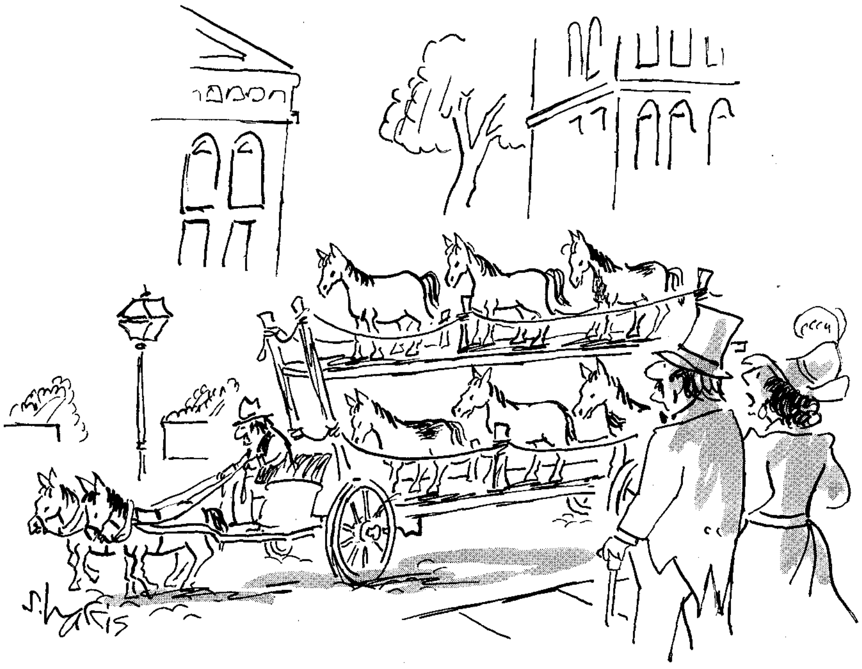
Des plays no official role in these negotiations, but he is using his political connections to help the Bandas, and Alan said he admired Des's efforts. "Some people don't like Des," he told me, "because they think he is a—what is it?—a bully. But he always promotes Banda, and that's good for all of us."

I asked Alan what he thought should be done in Ambon, and he said the Army should take over, as it would have done under Suharto. "Under Suharto, no problems, yah? Under Wahid, many, many problems. I think for the poor people Suharto was better."

But what about all the rich friends of Suharto who pocketed money that was intended to help the poor?

"Yes, but the poor people, they don't care about the corruption, as long as they are safe and can do their work. Under Suharto, they were safe. Now they are not safe—and they are more poor, because they can't work."

The dock at Banda Neira was crowded with people who had come to greet the Ambassador. When they saw only me, looking less than ambassadorial in coffee-stained shorts, their faces fell.



"They look just like last year's models."

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A blue-suited security guard at the gate of the harbor barked out a ceremonial greeting to Des.

"What did he say?" I asked.

"He said, 'Welcome to your kingdom.' "

Across the quiet water of the harbor, I could see the dark silhouette of Banda's volcano, a perfect cone shape, looming. Inland, some spotlights shone on the walls of the old hilltop fort, Belgica, built in the shape of a pentagon by the Dutch in 1611, a near-copy of which once stood in lower Manhattan. We walked to Des's hotel, the Maulana, which is right next to the pier. The few remaining staff brought out cakebread and nutmeg jam, a delectable quince-like confection, and nutmeg-flavored drinks.

As we ate on the veranda of the Dutch colonial-style building, Des pointed out pictures of himself with Princess Diana, Jacques Cousteau, and Mick Jagger, all of whom had been guests of the Maulana in better times. Since the troubles in Ambon began, fewer than twenty tourists have stayed at the hotel. Banda has remained mostly peaceful during that time, although there was a bad period in the spring of 1999, when a clash between Christians and Muslims escalated into violence. As in Ambon, houses were set on fire. Des's hotel became a sanctuary for some two hundred and fifty people who felt unsafe in their homes. One night, a mob of three hundred gathered outside, calling on Des to send out the Christians. He put on his white prayer clothes and black kepi, and went outside to confront the crowd.

Tamalia Alisjahbana calls Des a "practical romantic." The idealism that he had learned at the feet of Hatta and Sjahrir was hard to sustain as an Indonesian businessman, but it returned as he left his hotel to face the mob.

"What do you want?" he asked the mob.

"We want to kill all the Christians!"

"Over my dead body!"

The Bandanese in the mob were not prepared to kill an *orang kaya;* the Ambonese had no such scruples.

"Don't you remember," Des cried, "that in the Koran Muhammad says it is a sin to harm people who have come to a place for sanctuary?"

With this appeal, Des managed to hold off the mob for two nights, until a destroyer came from Ambon and took all but a few Christians off the islands. For his bravery, Des was awarded the Mahaputra, the highest civilian honor in Indonesia.

That scene was difficult to imagine on this beautiful evening; the colonnades and the curving second-story balustrade conspired to hide conflict in the graceful lines of the colonial architecture, which had achieved a harmonious marriage of East and West in art that could never be managed in politics. We finished our meal, and Des retired to his house on the hill above the hotel, saying that tomorrow we would visit the nutmeg plantation. I stayed on the veranda, savoring the feeling of having finally arrived. For about five minutes, I was as far away from New York as I had ever been; then some young men appeared from the shadowy street outside, turned on the TV, found MTV, and sat transfixed before the Spice Islands of celebrity back home.

The Dutch monopoly on nutmeg lasted about two hundred and fifty years. But local uprisings, lazy and corrupt *perkeniers*, and a variety of natural disasters (on a single day—April 2, 1778—the Bandas suffered an earthquake, a tidal wave, a volcanic eruption, and a hurricane) made the monopoly difficult and expensive to maintain. The British, who occupied the Bandas for a total of about fourteen years, took seedlings and cultivated them in Grenada; a quarter of the world's nutmeg now comes from there. Nutmeg's miraculous health-giving properties were debunked, its popularity as a flavoring declined in European cuisine, and the advent of refrigeration reduced demand for the use of the spice as a preservative. By the time the Japanese invaded the Bandas, in 1942, the nutmeg plantations were in steep decline, and two attempts by the Indonesian government to revive them ended in failure.

Des's nutmeg plantation is on the site of one of the old Dutch *perkens*, on the nearby island of Lonthor. We made the trip there in his outboard boat. Lonthor has a village in the highlands; the rest of the island is covered with jungle. As we approached it, Des pointed to the bottom of the ocean, twenty feet down but perfectly clear, where an old Dutch urn rested, encrusted with coral. Near the shore were the ruins of a Dutch building, and beside that Des had set up a greenhouse to nurture his seedlings.

Nutmeg is a dioecious tree, which means that some plants have pistils (the females) and some have stamens (the males). Since the females give more fruit, it is important to sex the seedlings early, before replanting, for the greatest possible yield. "What I have learned," Des said, "is that nutmeg has the same nature as a human being. From the flower to the fruit takes nine months, as with humans." He pointed to several two-year-old trees. One was approximately twice as high as the other. "I will bet a thousand dollars the tall one is the female. Again, just like human beings. The girls reach puberty more quickly than the boys."

We headed into the jungle. Very tall tropical almond trees grow throughout the plantation, providing the nutmeg trees with necessary shelter from the tropical sun. We passed some of the plantation workers' houses, made of bamboo and palm thatch, with wet laundry hanging outside, soaked by a recent downpour. The workers are paid in nutmeg—half of what they pick, they keep. Nutmeg has no particular season; the fruit ripens all year long, so its harvest supplies the islanders with a steady income. With the price of ground nutmeg currently between nine and ten dollars a pound—growing demand for nutmeg from Eastern European countries has raised the price in recent years—people in the islands can subsist on what they pick. In the absence of a tourist economy, fishing and nutmeg are the only two industries the Bandas have.

Des pointed to some of the nutmeg trees that were more than two hundred and fifty years old. They no longer bear fruit. "We learned that the reason the plantation was dying out," he said, "is that you can't grow healthy new trees from trees that are more than sixty years old. You see, in Banda we have green pigeons that eat the nutmeg seeds. Having a few seeds in their stomachs helps with their digestion. And when these birds expel the seeds, complete with its own fertilizer, a new tree grows. But if the nuts come from trees more than sixty years old, the seedlings are no good. They are weak and—what do you call it?—scrawny." He pointed to a couple of unhealthy young trees that had been generated from the seeds of older trees. "Again, it is just like with human beings. Old men don't produce the healthiest children."

I asked if the nutmeg plantation could pay for itself.

"No, not yet. In five years, when all the trees we have planted begin to bear fruit, then maybe we can become a major supplier in Holland, perhaps establish our own brand—who wouldn't want a taste of Banda in their food? But now we just sell what we harvest to the Chinese in Surabaya. The next few years will be the test of whether we can survive. If tourism to Banda was good, I could use the money from my hotel to pay for the plantation, but because of the problems in Ambon I can't do that. And although the Indonesian government pledged two million dollars to help me get started, only twenty thousand has ever been paid. We asked the World Wildlife Fund to help, but so far no funds have been made available."

Deep in the sodden jungle, we came upon some nutmeg trees that were loaded with the golden fruit. The trees were about forty feet high, the size of a pear tree, but with short, bushy branches and glossy, dark-green leaves. The fruit's flesh, yellow with a faint orange blush, is about the size of a nectarine and has the downy texture of a peach. When ripe, the fruit splits, and the bright-red casing of mace shows inside. The workers core this fruit with a paring knife and leave it lying under the trees; the mace and the nuts are dried in the sun. The nutmeg itself is a kernel about the size of a plum pit. Medieval travellers used to carry whole nutmegs and graters in their pockets, to season their meat and ale.

Des cracked a nut for me, and I chipped a piece off the enclosed nutmeg with my thumbnail and inhaled. It didn't smell like Christmas anymore. Now it smelled like trouble.

Since the next boat back to Ambon wouldn't be in port for another week, I had plenty of time to get over to Pulau Run, which is fourteen miles from Banda Neira. As it turned out, time was necessary, because we had to wait for the east wind, which blows from mid-May through October, to slacken enough to permit us to cross the sea in Des's powerboat. While we waited, Des took me to see different corners of his kingdom. We followed dolphins, fed Des's pet sharks, which are kept in large pens in the ocean, explored the ghostly European quarter of the town, and I climbed the volcano on the nearby island of Banda Gunung Api, and swam back to Banda Neira.

The islands had all the elements of paradise, at least in the sense in which tour operators use the word, but it was hard not to feel bad for the Bandanese. In the market, the wood carvings and pearls went unbought, and the festively painted Ice Cream Shoppe was always empty. In the mornings, Des was full of enthusiasm for showing me some new aspect of the islands' beauty, but by late afternoon he seemed tired and depressed, as though the effort to remain optimistic about the Bandas' prospects exhausted him.

One evening, Des looked up at the sky and declared that tomorrow we could make the passage to Pulau Run if we left early. I got up before dawn and ate my cakebread and nutmeg jam, listening to the now familiar sounds of the morning: bristles sweeping wet leaves from the concrete, the drowsy slap of rubber flip-flops in the kitchen, the crowing cocks, and fishermen singing as they paddled their dugout canoes out of the harbor.

The water in the harbor was calm, but in the open sea we encountered four-to-six-foot swells, almost more than the boat could manage. Run, in the hazy distance, looked forbidding, its western headlands buttressed with cliffs and covered with jungle. After about an hour and a half of rough seas, we made the lee of the island and headed for the village. Landing on the beach, we tied the boat to a log and walked up some stone steps to the house of the local *camat*, or mayor, who produced some chairs and sweet tea for us.

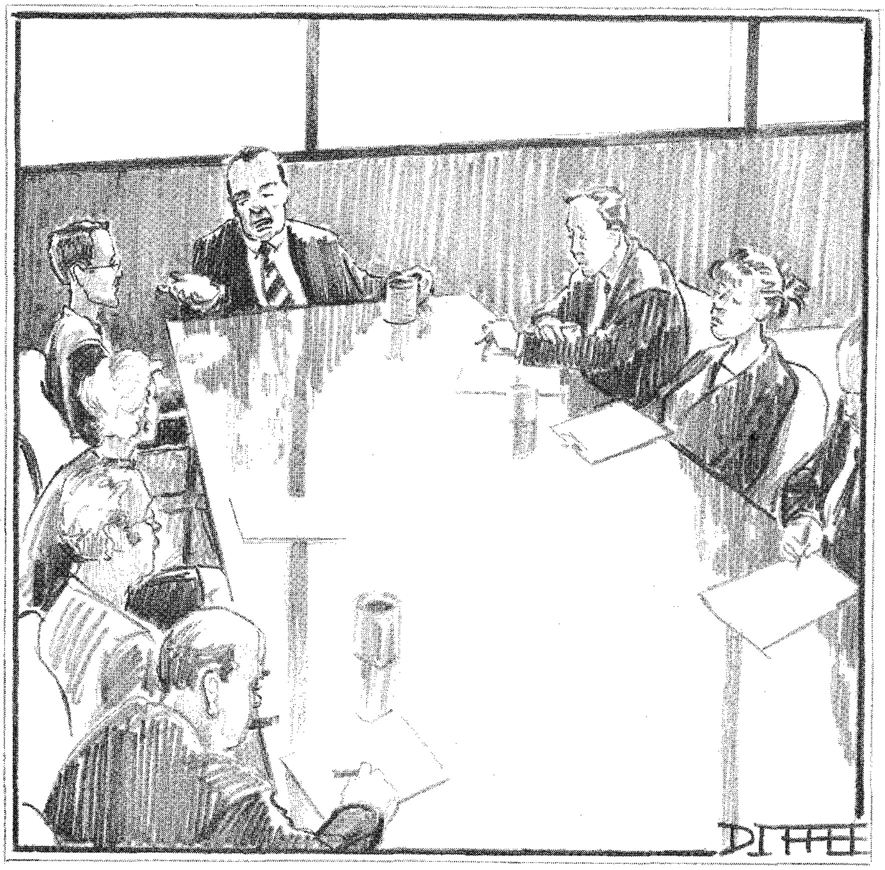
The village is built along the hillside, and is traversed by two concrete walkways that are connected by steps at either end. It has about twelve hundred inhabitants. The island has no fresh water, no telephones, no cars, a few TVs, and only occasional electricity. Night life consists of the call to evening prayers and karaoke.

We went along one walkway, then turned around and followed the other back. On both sides were blue and white houses with bright tiled floors. Exotic birds squawked from inside many of the homes. Along the walkways, families had spread out recently harvested spices on rattan trays to dry. Mace, nutmeg, cloves, and coffee were browning in the hot sun. A crowd of boys tagged along behind me, and astonished cries of "To-reest!" filled the quiet village.

When we returned, Des sat down in the *camat's* house to rest, and I climbed up a slippery cliff and walked through the jungle until I came to the ruins of a Dutch nutmeg factory. The rusted iron girders of the two-story structure were all that remained, with the white sky for a roof, and the vast, empty ocean showing through the sides. "I have seen the mysterious shores," Marlow says of the East in Conrad's story "Youth," ". . . where a stealthy Nemesis lies in wait, pursues, overtakes so many of the conquering race, who are proud of their wisdom, of their knowledge, of their strength." By valuing the spice over the islands that produced it, the Dutch policy contained its own nemesis, because, as the commodity declined, so did the Dutch East India Company's investment in its colonies. When the V.O.C. finally closed its books on the Dutch East Indies, the company was twelve million guilders in debt.

As I stood beside this ruined trade tower, the breeze brought the sweet-savory, vaguely medicinal smell of nutmeg. I followed the scent and found a family engaged in harvesting the fruit in a small clearing in the jungle. A woman and four young children sat beneath a few trees left over from the Dutch *perken*, splitting fruit and collecting the mace-covered seeds in a rattan basket. An older boy was up in a tree with a long bamboo pole that had a knife attached to it, slicing fruit from the branches, while a young man, bare-chested and muscular, loaded the cored seeds into a sack.

The children looked startled, but the woman on the ground pointed at her pile and smiled, pleased with her harvest. Like so many before me, I felt the desire to trade. I had a Yankees cap in my bag, a token of my island, which I had brought from home as a gesture of cultural exchange—but the woman didn't want it. So I took out some money and filled my pockets with nutmegs to take back to Manhattan. ♦



"In the interest of increasing revenue this quarter, Evan, here, will be leading an initiative to rip off liquor stores."

FICTION

BULLDOG

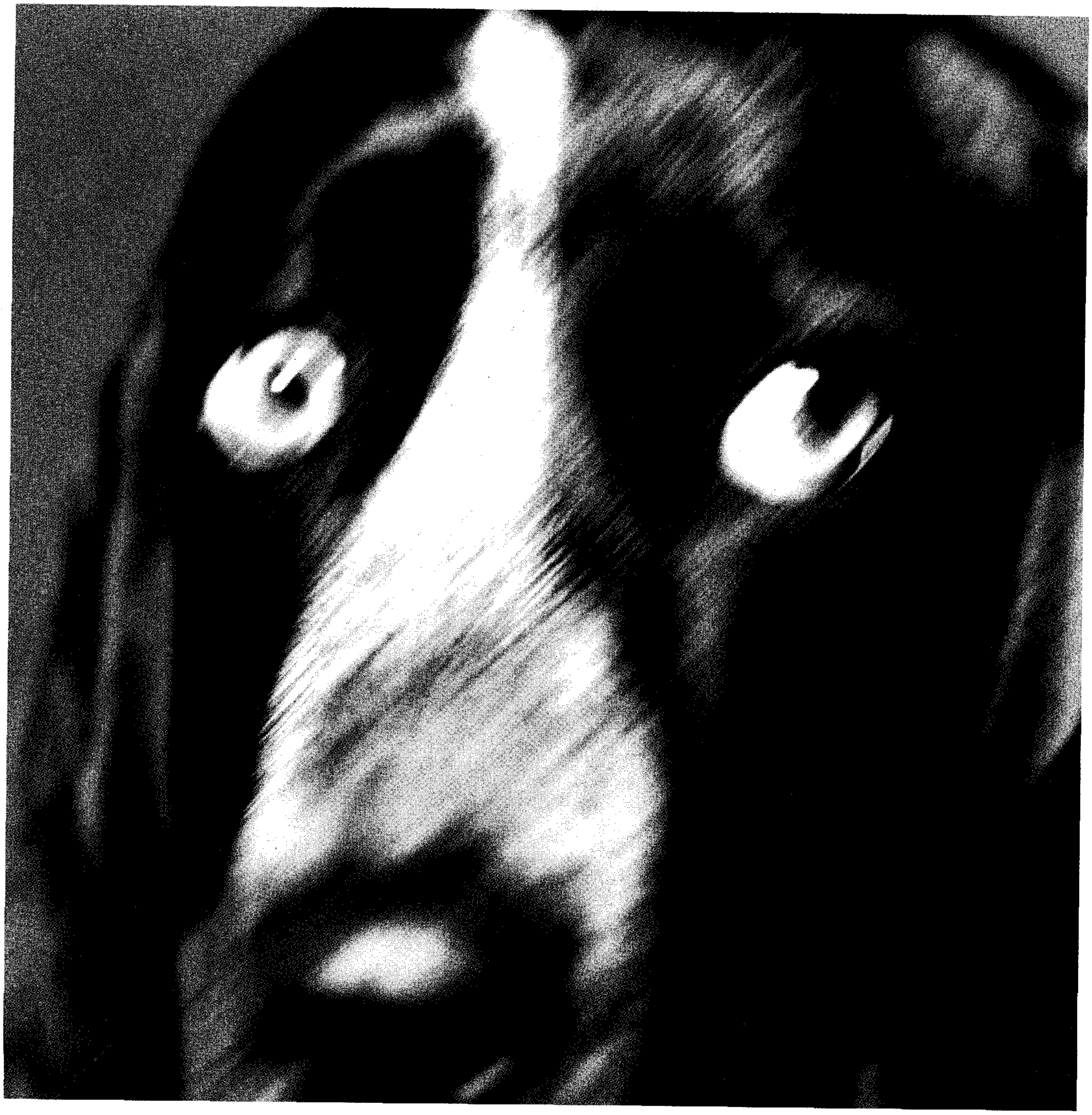
BY ARTHUR MILLER

He saw this tiny ad in the paper: "Black Brindle Bull puppies, $3.00 each." He had something like ten dollars from his housepainting job, which he hadn't deposited yet, but they had never had a dog in the house. His father was taking a long nap when the idea crested in his mind, and his mother, in the middle of a bridge game when he asked her if it would be all right, shrugged absently and threw a card. He walked around the house trying to decide, and the feeling spread through him that he'd better hurry, before somebody else got the puppy first. In his mind, there was already one particular puppy that belonged to him—it was his puppy and the puppy knew it. He had no idea what a brindle bull looked like, but it sounded tough and wonderful. And he had the three dollars, though it soured him to think of spending it when they had such bad money worries, with his father gone bankrupt again. The tiny ad hadn't mentioned how many puppies there were. Maybe there were only two or three, which might be bought by this time.

The address was on Schermerhorn Street, which he had never heard of. He called, and a woman with a husky voice explained how to get there and on which line. He was coming from the Midwood section, and the elevated Culver line, so he would have to change at Church Avenue. He wrote everything down and read it all back to her. She still had the puppies, thank God. It took more than an hour, but the train was almost empty, this being Sunday, and with a breeze from its open wood-framed windows it was cooler than down in the street. Below in empty lots he could see old Italian women, their heads covered with red bandannas, bent over and loading their aprons with dandelions. His Italian school friends said they were for wine and salads. He remembered trying to eat one once when he was playing left field in the lot near his house, but it was bitter and salty as tears. The old wooden train, practically unloaded, rocked and clattered lightly through the hot afternoon. He passed above a block where men were standing in driveways watering their cars as though they were hot elephants. Dust floated pleasantly through the air.

The Schermerhorn Street neighborhood was a surprise, totally different from his own, in Midwood. The houses here were made of brownstone, and were not at all like the clapboard ones on his block, which had been put up only a few years before or, in the earliest cases, in the twenties. Even the sidewalks looked old, with big squares of stone instead of cement, and bits of grass growing in the cracks between them. He could tell that Jews didn't live here, maybe because it was so quiet and unenergetic and not a soul was sitting outside to enjoy the sun. Lots of windows were wide open, with expressionless people leaning on their elbows and staring out, and cats stretched out on some of the sills, many of the women in their bras and the men in underwear trying to catch a breeze. Trickles of sweat were creeping down his back, not only from the heat but also because he realized now that he was the only one who wanted the dog, since his parents hadn't really had an opinion and his brother, who was older, had said, "What are you, crazy, spending your few dollars on a puppy? Who knows if it will be any good? And what are you going to feed it?" He thought bones, and his brother, who always knew what was right or wrong, yelled, "Bones! They have no teeth yet!" Well, maybe soup, he had mumbled. "Soup! You going to feed a puppy *soup*?" Suddenly he saw that he had arrived at the address. Standing there, he felt the bottom falling out, and he knew it was all a mistake, like one of his dreams or a lie that he had stupidly tried to defend as being real. His heart sped up and he felt he was blushing and walked on for half a block or so. He was the only one out, and people in a few of the windows were watching him on the empty street. But how could he go home after he had come so far? It seemed he'd been travelling for weeks or a year. And now to get back on the subway with nothing? Maybe he ought at least to get a look at the puppy, if the woman would let him. He had looked it up in the Book of Knowledge, where they had two full pages of dog pictures, and there had been a white English bulldog with bent front legs and teeth that stuck out from its lower jaw, and a little black-and-white Boston bull, and a long-nosed pit bull, but they had no picture of a brindle bull. When you came down to it, all he really knew about brindle bulls was that they would cost three dollars. But he had to at least get a look at him, his puppy, so he went back down the block and rang the basement doorbell, as the woman had told him to do. The sound was so loud it startled him, but he felt if he ran away and she came out in time to see him it would be even more embarrassing, so he stood there with sweat running down over his lip.

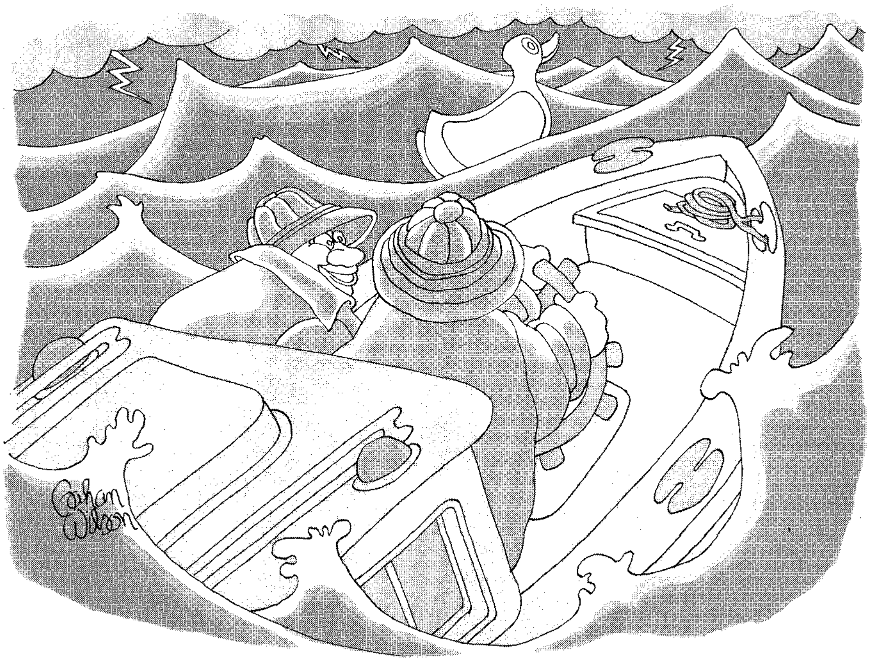
An inner door under the stoop opened, and a woman came out and looked at him through the dusty iron bars of the gate. She wore some kind of gown, light-pink silk, which she held together with one hand, and she had long black hair down to her shoulders. He didn't dare look directly into her face, so he couldn't tell exactly what she looked like, but he could feel her tension as she stood there behind her closed gate. He felt she could not imagine what he was doing ringing her bell and he quickly asked if she was the one who'd put the ad in. Oh! Her manner changed right away, and she unlatched the gate and pulled it open. She was shorter than he and had a peculiar smell, like a mixture of milk and stale air. He followed her into the apartment, which was so dark he could hardly make out anything, but he could hear the high yapping of puppies. She had to yell to ask him where he lived and how old he was,



JOHN SANN

and when he told her thirteen she clapped a hand over her mouth and said that he was very tall for his age, but he couldn't understand why this seemed to embarrass her, except that she may have thought he was fifteen, which people sometimes did. But even so. He followed her into the kitchen, at the back of the apartment, where finally he could see around him, now that he'd been out of the sun for a few minutes. In a large cardboard box that had been unevenly cut down to make it shallower he saw three puppies and their mother, who sat looking up at him with her tail moving slowly back and forth. He didn't think she looked like a bulldog, but he didn't dare say so. She was just a brown dog with flecks of black and a few stripes here and there, and the puppies were the same. He did like the way their little ears drooped, but he said to the woman that he had wanted to see the puppies but hadn't made up his mind yet. He really didn't know what to do next, so, in order not to seem as though he didn't appreciate the puppies, he asked if she would mind if he held one. She said that was all right and reached down into the box and lifted out two puppies and set them down on the blue linoleum. They didn't look like any bulldogs he had ever seen, but he was embarrassed to tell her that he didn't really want one. She picked one up and said, "Here," and put it on his lap.

He had never held a dog before and was afraid it would slide off, so he cradled it in his arms. It was hot on his skin and very soft and kind of disgusting in a thrilling way. It had gray eyes like tiny buttons. It troubled him that the Book of Knowledge hadn't had a picture of this kind of dog. A real bulldog was kind of tough and dangerous, but these were just brown dogs. He sat there on the arm of the green upholstered chair with the puppy on his lap, not knowing what to do next. The woman, meanwhile, had put herself next to him, and it felt like she had



"They say that those who follow the Great Rubber Duckie will ride safely through any storm!"

• •

given his hair a pat, but he wasn't sure because he had very thick hair. The more seconds that ticked away the less sure he was of what to do. Then she asked if he would like some water, and he said he would, and she went to the faucet and ran water, which gave him a chance to stand up and set the puppy back in the box. She came back to him holding the glass and as he took it she let her gown fall open, showing her breasts like half-filled balloons, saying she couldn't believe he was only thirteen. He gulped the water and started to hand her back the glass, and she suddenly drew his head to her and kissed him. In all this time, for some reason, he hadn't been able to look into her face, and when he tried to now he couldn't see anything but a blur and hair. She reached down to him and a shivering started in the backs of his legs. It got sharper, until it was almost like the time he touched the live rim of a light socket while trying to remove a broken bulb. He would never be able to remember getting down on the carpet—he felt like a waterfall was smashing down on top of his head. He remembered getting inside her heat and his head banging and banging against the leg of her couch. He was almost at Church Avenue, where he had to change for the elevated Culver line, before realizing she hadn't taken his three dollars, and he couldn't recall agreeing to it but he had this small cardboard box on his lap with a puppy mewling inside. The scraping of nails on the cardboard sent chills up his back. The woman, as he remembered now, had cut two holes into the top of the box, and the puppy kept sticking his nose through them.

His mother jumped back when he untied the cord and the puppy pushed up and scrambled out, yapping. "What is he doing?" she yelled, with her hands in the air as though she were about to be attacked. By this time, he'd lost his fear of the puppy and held him in his arms and let him lick his face, and seeing this his mother calmed down a bit. "Is he hungry?" she asked, and stood with her mouth slightly open, ready for anything, as he put the puppy on the floor again. He said the puppy might be hungry, but he thought he could eat only soft things, although his little teeth were as sharp as pins. She got out some soft cream cheese and put a little piece of it on the floor, but the puppy only sniffed at it and peed. "My God in Heaven!" she yelled, and quickly got a piece of newspaper to blot it up with. When she bent over that way, he thought of the woman's heat and was ashamed and shook his head. Suddenly her name came to him—Lucille—which she had told him when they were on the floor. Just as he was slipping in, she had opened her eyes and said, "My name is Lucille." His mother brought out a bowl of last night's noodles and set it on the floor. The puppy raised his little paw and tipped the bowl over, spilling some of the chicken soup at the bottom. This he began to lick hungrily off the linoleum. "He likes chicken soup!" his mother yelled happily, and immediately decided he would most likely enjoy an egg and so put water on to boil. Somehow the puppy knew that she was the one to follow and walked behind her, back and forth, from the stove to the refrigerator. "He follows me!" his mother said, laughing happily.

On his way home from school the next day, he stopped at the hardware store and bought a puppy collar for seventy-five cents, and Mr. Schweckert threw in a piece of clothesline as a leash. Every night as he fell asleep, he brought out Lucille like something from a secret treasure box and wondered if he could dare phone her and maybe be with her again. The puppy, which he had named Rover, seemed to grow noticeably bigger every day, although he still showed no signs of looking like any bulldog. The boy's father thought Rover should live in the cellar, but it was very lonely down there and he would never stop yapping. "He misses his mother," his mother said, so every night the boy started him off on some rags in an old wash basket down there, and when he'd yapped enough the boy was allowed to bring him up and let him sleep on some rags in the kitchen, and everybody was thankful for the quiet. His mother tried to walk the puppy in the quiet street they lived on, but he kept tangling the rope around her ankles, and because she was afraid to hurt him she exhausted herself following him in all his zigzags. It didn't always happen, but many times when the boy looked at Rover he'd think of Lucille and could almost feel the heat again. He would sit on the porch steps stroking the puppy and think of her, the insides of her thighs. He still couldn't imagine her face, just her long black hair and her strong neck.

One day, his mother baked a chocolate cake and set it to cool on the kitchen table. It was at least eight inches thick, and he knew it would be delicious. He was drawing a lot in those days, pictures of spoons and forks or cigarette packages or, occasionally, his mother's Chinese vase with the dragon on it, anything that had an interesting shape. So he put the cake on a chair next to the table and drew for a while and then got up and went outside for some reason and got involved with the tulips he had planted the previous fall that were just now showing their tips. Then he decided to go look for a practically new baseball he had mislaid the previous summer and which he was sure, or pretty sure, must be down in the cellar in a cardboard box. He had never really got down to the bottom of that box, because he was always distracted by finding something he'd forgotten he had put in there. He had started down into the cellar from the outside entrance, under the back porch, when he noticed that the pear tree, which he had planted two years before, had what looked like a blossom on one of its slender branches. It amazed him, and he felt proud and successful. He had paid thirty-five cents for the tree on Court Street and thirty cents for an apple tree, which he planted about seven feet away, so as to be able to hang a hammock between them someday. They were still too thin and young, but maybe next year. He always loved to stare at the two trees, because he had planted them, and he felt they somehow knew he was looking at them, and even that they were looking back at him. The back yard ended at a ten-foot-high wooden fence that surrounded Erasmus Field, where the semi-pro and sandlot teams played on weekends, teams like the House of David and the Black Yankees and the one with Satchel Paige, who was famous as one of the country's greatest pitchers except he was a Negro and couldn't play in the big leagues, obviously. The House of Davids all had long beards—he'd never understood why, but maybe they were Orthodox Jews, although they didn't look it. An extremely long foul shot over right field could drop a ball into the yard, and that was the ball it had occurred to him to search for, now that spring had come and the weather was warming up. In the basement, he found the box and was immediately surprised at how sharp his ice skates were, and recalled that he had once had a vise to clamp the skates side by side so that a stone could be rubbed on the blades. He pushed aside a torn fielder's glove, a hockey goalie's glove whose mate he knew had been lost, some pencil stubs and a package of crayons, and a little wooden man whose arms flapped up and down when you pulled a string. Then he heard the puppy yapping over his head, but it was not his usual sound—it was continuous and very sharp and loud. He ran upstairs and saw his mother coming down into the living room from the second floor, her dressing gown flying out behind her, a look of fear on her face. He could hear the scraping of the puppy's nails on the linoleum, and he rushed into the kitchen. The puppy was running around and around in a circle and sort of screaming, and the boy could see at once that his belly was swollen. The cake was on the floor, and most of it was gone. "My cake!" his mother screamed, and picked up the dish with the remains on it and held it up high as though to save it from the puppy, even though practically nothing was left. The boy tried to catch Rover, but he slipped away into the living room. His mother was behind him yelling "The carpet!" Rover kept running, in wider circles now that he had more space, and foam was forming on his muzzle. "Call the police!" his mother yelled. Suddenly, the puppy fell and lay on his side, gasping and making little squeaks with each breath. Since they had never had a dog and knew nothing about veterinarians, he looked in the phone book and found the A.S.P.C.A. number and called them. Now he was afraid to touch Rover, because the puppy snapped at his hand when it got close and he had this foam on his mouth. When the van drew up in front of the house, the boy went outside and saw a young guy removing a little cage from the back. He told him that the dog had eaten practically a whole cake, but the man had no interest and came into the house and stood for a moment looking down at Rover, who was making little yips now but was still down on his side. The man dropped some netting over him and when he slipped him into the cage, the puppy tried to get up and run. "What do you think is the matter with him?" his mother asked, her mouth turned down in revulsion, which the boy now felt in himself. "What's the matter with him is he ate a cake," the man said. Then he carried the cage out and slid it through the back door into the darkness of the van. "What will you do with him?" the boy asked. "You want

The reader's guide
to laughter.

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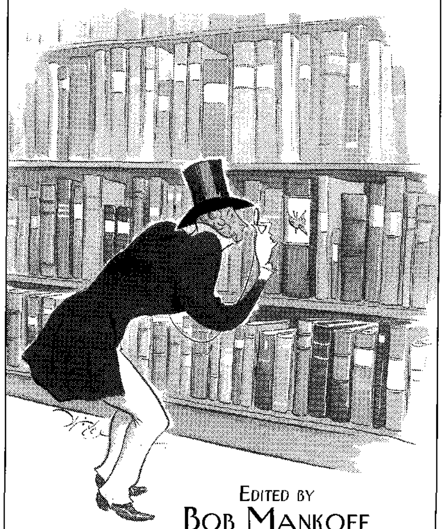

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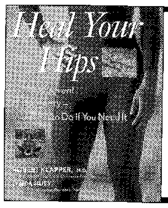

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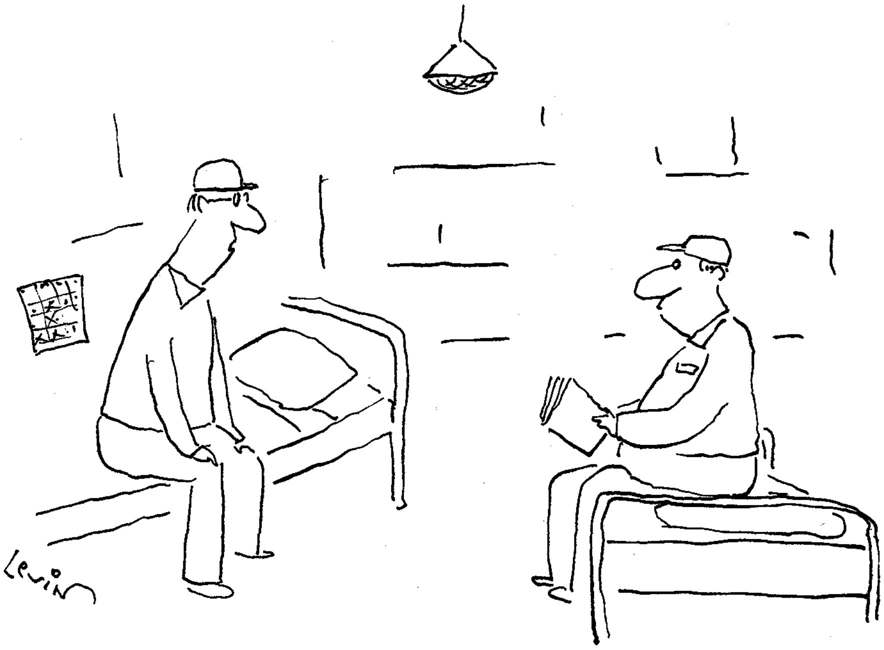
him?" the man snapped. His mother was standing on the stoop now and overheard them. "We can't have him here," she called over, with fright and definiteness in her voice, and approached the young man. "We don't know how to keep a dog. Maybe somebody who knows how to keep him would want him." The young man nodded with no interest either way, got behind the wheel, and drove off.

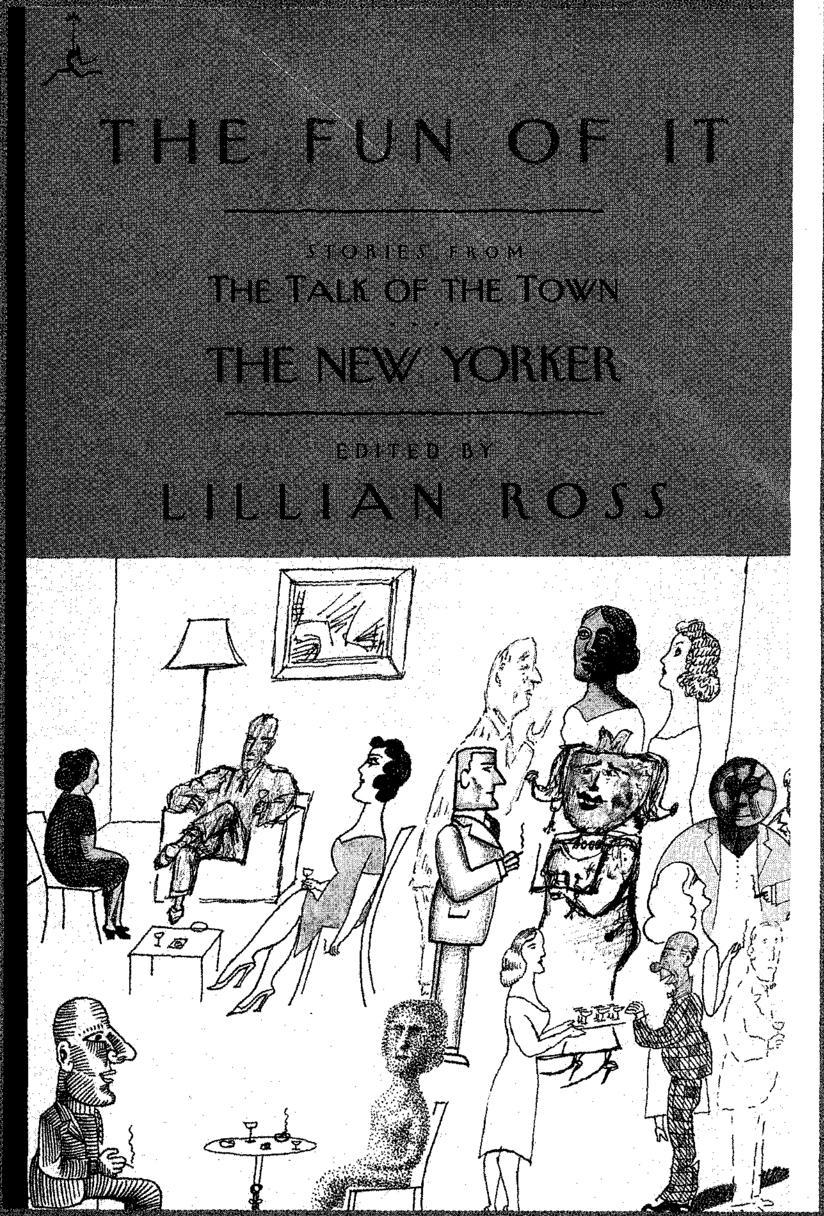
The boy and his mother watched the van until it disappeared around the corner. Inside, the house was dead quiet again. He didn't have to worry anymore about Rover doing something on the carpets or chewing the furniture, or whether he had water or needed to eat. Rover had been the first thing he'd looked for on returning from school every day and on waking in the morning, and he had always worried that the dog might have done something to displease his mother or father. Now all that anxiety was gone and, with it, the pleasure, and it was silent in the house.

He went back to the kitchen table and tried to think of something he could draw. A newspaper lay on one of the chairs, and he opened it and inside saw a Saks stocking ad showing a woman with a gown pulled aside to display her leg. He started copying it and thought of Lucille again. Could he possibly call her, he wondered, and do what they had done again? Except that she would surely ask about Rover, and he couldn't do anything but lie to her. He remembered how she had cuddled Rover in her arms and even kissed his nose. She had really loved that puppy. How could he tell her he was gone? Just sitting and thinking of her he was hardening up like a broom handle and he suddenly thought what if he called her and said his family were thinking of having a second puppy to keep Rover company? But then he would have to pretend he still had Rover, which would mean two lies, and that was a little frightening. Not the lies so much as trying to remember, first, that he still had Rover, second, that he was serious about a second puppy, and, third, the worst thing, that when he got up off Lucille he would have to say that unfortunately he couldn't actually take another puppy because . . . Why? The thought of all that lying exhausted him. Then he visualized being in her heat again and he thought his head would explode, and the idea came that when it was over she might insist on his taking another puppy. Force it on him. After all, she had not accepted his three dollars and Rover had been a sort of gift, he thought. It would be embarrassing to refuse another puppy, especially when he had supposedly come back to her for exactly that reason. He didn't dare go through all that and gave up the whole idea. But then the thought crept back again of her spreading apart on the floor the way she had, and he returned to searching for some reason he could give for not taking another puppy after he had supposedly come all the way across Brooklyn to get one. He could just see the look on her face on his turning down a puppy, the puzzlement or, worse, anger. Yes, she could very possibly get angry and see through him, realizing that all he had come for was to get into her and the rest of it was nonsense, and she might feel insulted. Maybe even slap him. What would he do then? He couldn't fight a grown woman. Then again, it now occurred to him that by this time she might well have sold the other two puppies, which at three dollars were pretty inexpensive. Then what? He began to wonder, suppose he just called her up and said he'd like to come over again and see her, without mentioning any puppies? He would have to tell only one lie, that he still had Rover and that the family all loved him and so on. He could easily remember that much. He went to the piano and played some chords, mostly in the dark bass, to calm himself. He didn't really know how to play, but he loved inventing chords and letting the vibrations shoot up his arms. He played, feeling as though something inside him had sort of shaken loose or collapsed altogether. He was different than he had ever been, not empty and clear anymore but weighted with secrets and his lies, some told and some untold, but all of it disgusting enough to set him slightly outside his family, in a place where he could watch them now, and watch himself with them. He tried to invent a melody with the right hand and find matching chords with the left. By sheer luck, he was hitting some beauties. It was really amazing how his chords were just slightly off, with a discordant edge but still in some way talking to the right-hand melody. His mother came into the room full of surprise and pleasure. "What's happening?" she called out in delight. She could play and sight-read music and had tried and failed to teach him, because, she believed, his ear was too good and he'd rather play what he heard than do the labor of reading notes. She came over to the piano and stood beside him, watching his hands. Amazed, wishing as always that he could be a genius, she laughed. "Are you making this up?" she almost yelled, as though they were side by side on a roller coaster. He could only nod, not daring to speak and maybe lose what he had somehow snatched out of the air, and he laughed with her because he was so completely happy that he had secretly changed, and unsure at the same time that he would ever be able to play like this again. ♦



"Allegations were made, allegations were proved."

E. B. White visiting a potter's field. A. J. Liebling on a book tour with Albert Camus. John Updike navigating the passageways of midtown. Jacqueline Onassis chatting with Cornell Capa. Ian Frazier at the Monster Truck and Mud Bog Fall Nationals. Mark Singer with sixth graders adopting Hudson River striped bass.



THE FUN OF IT

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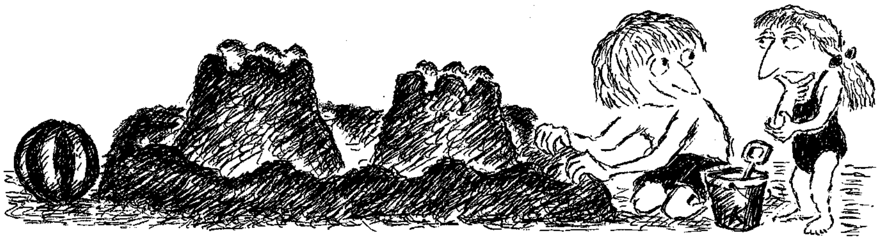
THE CRITICS



A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE LIFE OF THE SAINT

A novelist and a philosopher ask: How good is good enough?

BY JIM HOLT

Suppose you wish to achieve excellence in life, but you have no real talent for anything in particular. You are not smart enough to be a great scientist or creative enough to be a great artist; you do not possess the native shrewdness to be a distinguished statesman or the exquisite taste (and inherited wealth) to be a legendary hedonist. Are you then doomed to mediocrity? There is a school of thought that says no. The idea is that even if you are not clever or beautiful or talented, you can still, through sheer force of will, be very, very good. You can go beyond the norms of everyday morality—being kind to people, not telling lies, giving the odd dollar to Oxfam—and devote all your energies to feeding the hungry and succoring the afflicted. In other words, you can become a moral saint.

Is it a wise idea to strive to be as good and self-sacrificing as possible? Is "moral sainthood"—a coinage of the philosopher Susan Wolf—a form of human excellence one should aspire to? Is it, indeed, something each of us has a *duty* to aspire to? These questions are taken up in rather different ways by two new books. Nick Hornby's "How to Be Good" (Riverhead; $24.95) is a comic novel about the conversion of an inveterate grouch to the cause of ideal goodness, and how it affects the lives of those around him, notably that of his reasonably good wife. Simon Blackburn's "Being Good" (Oxford; $17.95) is a brief introduction to ethics, one that plays lightly and gracefully over a number of philosophical themes, including the relationship between being good and living well. If you are troubled by the gap between how good you are and how good you feel you ought to be, these books offer a fair measure of consolation.

Philosophers, over the past couple of thousand years, have offered two reasons for aiming at the heights of moral goodness: to improve the world and to perfect one's self. These reasons do not sit together very well, since one of them is directed outward and the other is directed inward. Can you really perfect your own self by forgetting it in the service of others? There are grounds, in fact, for thinking that being as good as possible is neither good for the world nor good for one's soul.

Start with the soul part. Do those who devote their lives to the service of others tend to have beautiful, Socrates-like personalities? Well, no. Unnaturally developed moral virtues—patience, charity in thought as well as in deed, a constant concern with alleviating the suffering of others—tend to crowd out the nonmoral virtues, like humor, intellectual curiosity, and dash. Susan Wolf has distinguished two kinds of moral saint: the Loving Saint, whose happiness lies wholly and exclusively in helping others; and the Rational Saint, who is made happy by the same things as the rest of us—friends, family, material comforts, art, books, sports, sex—but who sacrifices his happiness out of a sense of duty. The Loving Saint, blind to so much of what life offers, has a soul that is strangely barren. The Rational Saint, who must continually suppress or deny his strongest desires, has a soul that is soured by frustration.

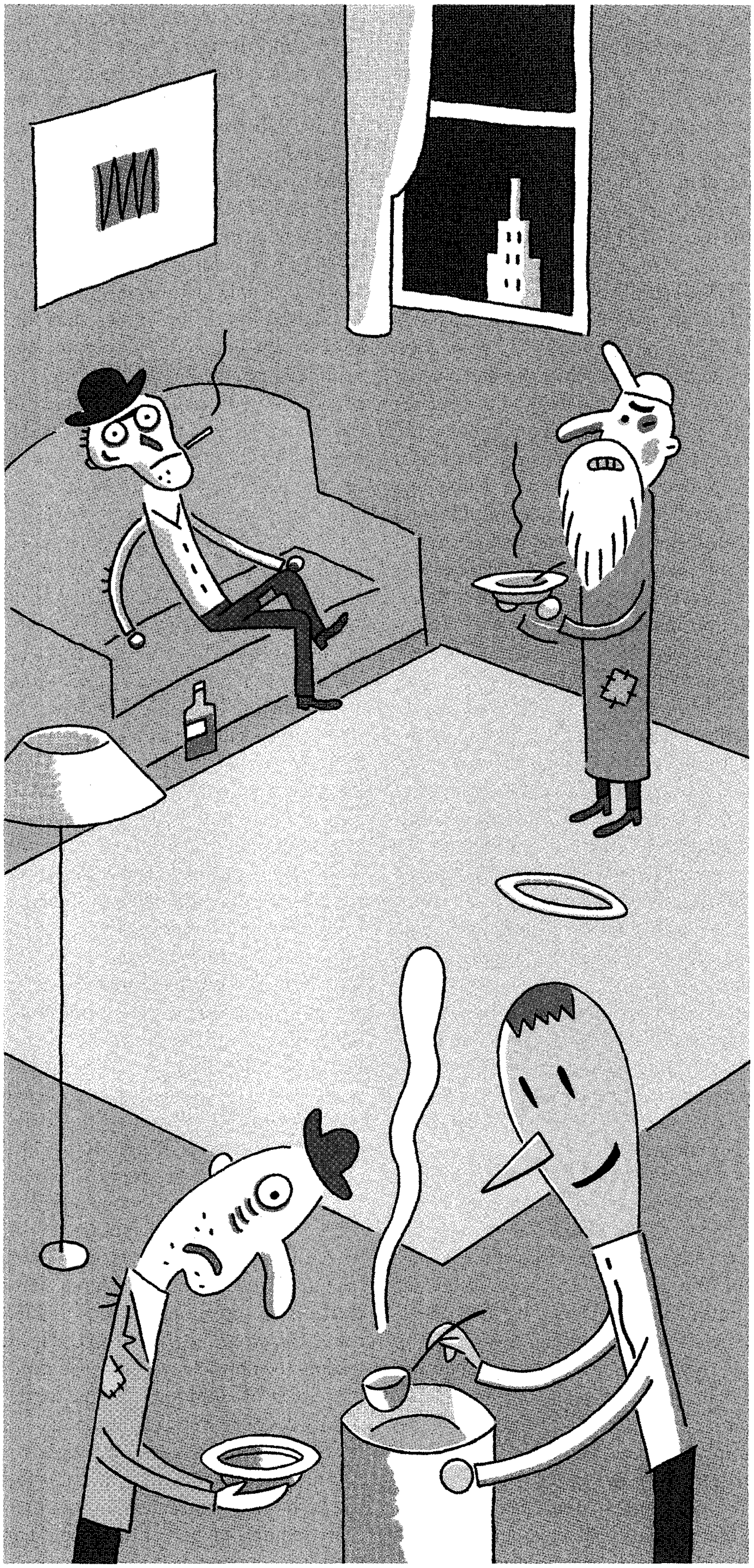
It's a point that has regularly been made about the humanitarians who loom largest in the public imagination: Florence Nightingale, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, Mother Teresa. Lytton Strachey, in "Eminent Victorians," made Florence Nightingale seem ludicrously inhuman. George Orwell scented a whiff of vanity emanating from Gandhi, and concluded that "sainthood is a thing that human beings must avoid." Albert Schweitzer has been condemned as a God-playing autocrat and racist. And, most recently, Christopher Hitchens has set off a stink bomb at the shrine of Mother Teresa, making her out to be willfully obtuse about the suffering of others. Interestingly, Dorothy Day, the heroine of the Catholic Worker Movement, has so far escaped this sort of revisionist soul-blackening. Evidently her saintliness was balanced by piquant elements left over from her bohemian-libertine past. She had redeeming vices.

Still, looking only at world-famous do-gooders leaves one open to the charge of selection bias. What happens when a fairly ordinary person takes up the cause of goodness with uncompromising zeal? That question is Nick Hornby's point of departure in "How to Be Good." The novel's narrator is Katie Carr, a doctor in her forties who works at a depressing clinic in North London. Katie feels that she is good enough: not only does she tend the sick ("You have to be good to look at boils in the rectal area") but she also holds nice, liberal opinions on homelessness, racism, and sexism; she reads the *Guardian* and votes Labour. Even the affair she is having as the novel opens, the first of her long marriage, is decorously conducted and quickly docked. Her husband, David, is less admirable; a sarcastic, lazy fellow, he writes a mock-bilious newspaper column called "The Angriest Man in Holloway" and dabbles at a satirical novel "about Britain's post-Diana touchy-feely culture."

This is a marriage that has gone to rot for the usual reasons—infidelity, mutual prickliness, boredom. But just when it appears to be collapsing, David experiences a Damascene conversion. Plagued by back pain, he goes to see a flaky young healer called D. J. GoodNews, who applies warm fingertips to David's temples and sucks a "black mist" out of him. Pure benevolence rushes in to fill the vacuum; David becomes a saint. "I think everything you think. But I'm going to walk it like I talk it," he declares to his astounded wife, who suspects a brain tumor. At first, David engages in random eleemosynary acts, trying to give away the Sunday roast on the street and donating one of the kids' computers to a battered-women's shelter. Soon he undertakes a neighborhood-wide scheme to house the homeless in spare bedrooms.

The motive behind David's sudden zealotry isn't entirely clear. Though he talks a lot about the need to improve the world, he also voices a yearning for self-perfection. "I don't believe in Heaven, or anything," he says. "But I want to be the kind of person that qualifies for entry anyway." If David's soul is becoming more beautiful, the effect is lost on Katie. Her husband now strikes her as "someone from whom all trace of facetiousness, every atom of self-irony, seems to have vanished." Defective as the old David was, he at least made her laugh, which, come to think of it, was why she married him in the first place. She detects a smugness, an ostentatiousness about his good works, which puts her triumphantly in mind of a passage from one of St. Paul's letters to the Corinthians: "Charity is not boastful, nor proud. It vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." But when she quotes it to her husband he reminds her that the very same passage was read at their wedding, with "love" in place of "charity"; both words, he points out, are used to translate the Latin noun *caritas*. "Love and charity share the same root word," she ponders to herself. "How is that possible, when everything in our recent history suggests that they cannot coexist, that they are antithetical, that if you put the two of them together in a sack they would bite and scratch and scream, until one of them is torn apart?"

Such reflections lead Katie to an epiphany, one that seems to bear the author's endorsement. The real paragon of soul beauty is not the self-sacrificing do-gooder; it is someone who leads a "rich and beautiful life," one filled with high artistic pleasures and exquisite personal affections—someone like, say, Vanessa Bell, whose biography Katie happens to be reading. And if lives of such rarefac-



Is being good compatible with doing good? In their different ways, Nick Hornby and Simon Blackburn wonder whether a too strict notion of morality isn't self-defeating.

PHILIPPE PETIT-ROULET

tion are no longer available to us—they are "a discontinued line," she thinks—we can at least get a tincture of them by reading Bloomsbury books and listening to tasteful CDs. That and looking after those close to you rather than worrying about all humanity—"because life's fucking hard enough as it is"—compose the secret of How to Be Good.

The Hornby solution jibes agreeably with our deep-seated inclinations toward moral laziness. But is it good enough? Some would argue that one has a duty to do as much good as possible, even if it does little for one's soul—and even if "life's fucking hard enough as it is." Suppose you see a little girl drowning in a shallow pool of water. Wouldn't you feel duty-bound to rescue her—never mind that jumping in the water means ruining your two-hundred-dollar shoes? Unfortunately, there are many children throughout the world in a situation analogous to that of the drowning girl. They are dying of starvation or of easily prevented maladies like diarrhea; and, owing to the existence of a network of overseas relief organizations, it is within your power to save them. Indeed, the estimated cost of rescuing one child in this way has been put at about two hundred dollars. All you have to do is call a toll-free number with your credit card in hand. Is there an important distinction between failing to do this and walking away from the drowning child? And, if there is not, can you in good conscience stop at just two hundred dollars? Don't your ethical convictions compel you to save as many children as your bank account permits?

In the past several years, philosophers like Peter Singer, of Princeton, and Peter Unger, of New York University, have used such simple but intuitively powerful "rescue cases" to argue for an inconvenient conclusion: we rich Westerners should be giving away most of our money to international relief efforts. Doing so is not praiseworthy; it is *required* by the ethical principles we all implicitly share. Singer himself has said that he gives away a fifth of his income, and wonders whether that is enough. How could it be? Even if a middle-class American family were already giving up four-fifths of its household income to Oxfam, an incremental donation of two hundred dollars would still save yet another child dying for lack of food or medical care, at the cost of relatively little distress to the giver. As for the occasional sybaritic indulgence, forget it. What's a bottle of Dom Perignon compared to a child's life?

If *that's* what morality asks of me, you might say, to hell with it. And Simon Blackburn, a philosopher at Cambridge, would probably sympathize with you. In "Being Good," he argues that this kind of overdemandingness threatens to undermine ethics itself. "The center of ethics must be occupied by things we can *reasonably* demand of each other," he writes. Our duty to help others cannot be infinite. The moral principles we adopt must not reduce us to slaves of the impersonal good. It may be praiseworthy to give away all your money in order to save starving children abroad, or to quit your Park Avenue medical practice and join Doctors Without Borders, or to invite the homeless to crash in your apartment, but it is not obligatory.

These conclusions of Blackburn's are comforting, and in line with those arrived at by the narrator of Hornby's novel. Yet how are we to resist those rescue-case arguments? Blackburn does not dwell on the matter, but one line of response goes something like this. Singer is an avowed utilitarian. In its purest form, utilitarianism says that we should seek to act in a way that brings about the greatest happiness in the world. Now, one test of an ethical principle is that it be "universalizable." We ask what the world would be like if everybody acted on this principle. What if everyone devoted himself to the happiness of others? Then, on average, everyone would be less happy, because everyone would be subordinating his own happiness to the needs of others. And if everyone gave all his money to Oxfam, the resulting contraction in consumer demand would cause the world economy to collapse, leading to enormous suffering. So these principles of doing good, you might think, are collectively self-defeating.

The universalization test suggests a way of quantifying our duty to help others. Perhaps the minimum sacrifice morality requires of us is simply our "fair share": the amount that, if everyone supplied it, would result in the most happiness and the least suffering in the world. This principle makes each individual's charitable burden quite reasonable: if you have already donated a modest sum to famine relief and done a little light ladling in the soup kitchen down at your local church, you can go ahead and pop that tin of sevruga in good conscience. (Well, not entirely good conscience, because now we have to worry about the sturgeon.) Any do-gooding you engage in beyond your fair share would be what ethicists call supererogatory—commendable to perform but not blameworthy to omit.

And suppose we do go beyond the call of duty. Even if we succeed in achieving some immediate good, there is no telling what the remoter consequences of our altruism will be. All we know is that these consequences will extend far into the future, beyond the purview of our will. Owing to the contingent and chaotic nature of cause and effect, the balance of good over evil involves something like a random walk, with unforeseen reversals at every stage. (Consider the doctor who successfully delivered the fourth child of Klara and Alois Hitler after the couple's first three infants had tragically sickened and died.) It is the unknowability of the distant effects of our actions that led G. E. Moore to say, in his "Principia Ethica," that "no sufficient reason has ever yet been found for considering one action more right or more wrong than another." Moore's conclusion, as it happens, had a liberating effect on Vanessa Bell and the Bloomsbury circle, who looked to him as their sage. Under his influence, the Bloomsburies decided that the virtues of self—the kind of virtues that go together with a "rich and beautiful life," as the narrator of "How to Be Good" puts it—were more important than the old Victorian virtues of charity and self-sacrifice.

Once you venture outside Bloomsbury, of course, you may encounter extraordinary circumstances in which it is possible to do extraordinary good. Think of the "good Germans" who risked their lives to aid Jews during the Final Solution, or of the sole member of Lieutenant Calley's platoon who conspicuously lowered his rifle instead of shooting the peasants at My Lai. What does it take to be good in such extreme situations? Skill can certainly help, as the examples of Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg show, but it is not always necessary. Is good will ever enough? Not unless it is combined with some other hard-to-define quality of character, which, waving our hands, we call "nerve" or "heart." Whatever this quality is, it is one that most seemingly good-willed people lack, which is why they become silent accomplices when great evils are being committed. In ordinary circumstances, of course, there remains the Oxfam option; yet even here there is no fixed proportion between the will to do good and the good one actually does. The widow's mite, for all the benevolence behind it, is null compared with the face-saving millions given to charities by the heartless capitalist.

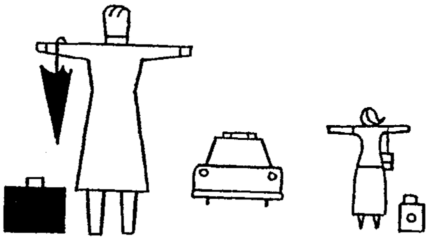
So exceptional goodness always seems to require special qualifications: either great savoir faire or great bravery plus exposure to extreme circumstances that call for moral heroism. If you happen to be short on both counts, you're probably out of the running. Sainthood, it turns out, is one of those career prospects—like making millions in mail order—that seem to be open to everyone but pan out for only the fortunate few.

Beyond the necessary technical and organizational skills, achieving great altruistic feats seems to require a sort of demonic creativity. Florence Nightingale, who dedicated her life to the care of the war wounded, did an enormous amount of good (although her reforms, by reducing the human cost of war, might have made future wars more likely). But Nightingale, as Strachey pointed out to shocked Edwardians, was not a sweet, self-abnegating angel of mercy; she was an angry, acerbic, sarcastic, and self-important woman of stern and indomitable will. She had, you could say, an artist's temperament. Evelyn Waugh once observed, "Humility is not a virtue propitious to the artist. It is often pride, emulation, avarice, malice—all the odious qualities—which drive a man to complete, elaborate, refine, destroy, renew his work until he has made something that gratifies his pride and envy and greed. And in doing so he enriches the world more than the generous and good, though he may lose his own soul in the process. That is the paradox of artistic achievement." It may also be the paradox of altruistic achievement. If you want to be a saint, forget about being an angel. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Hunters, *by Claire Messud (Harcourt; $23).* These novellas both have displaced protagonists who cannot decide whether to seek a deathlike stillness or to embrace life's mess. In the first, a Toronto cleaning woman finds that the ritualized relationship she enjoys with a long-term employer has provided more continuity than anything else in her life, which has included famine in rural Ukraine, slave labor in Germany, love in a displaced-persons camp, emigration, and a cozy family existence. In widowhood, however, her sense of order is in danger of taking over and annihilating all that is left. Being almost too fastidious to live is also the dilemma of the narrator of the second tale, an American academic in London who loathes the friendly woman who lives downstairs. The tone is Jamesian, but the ending holds a beast in the jungle only for the hapless fellow-tenant.

The Good People of New York, *by Thisbe Nissen (Knopf; $23).* In this dual coming-of-age novel, Nissen spoils her younger heroine, Miranda Anderson, with cheap gifts—including the credulity-straining opportunity to love and leave her high-school English teacher. The author is more thoughtful with Miranda's mother, Roz Anderson (née Rosenzweig), who seduces Miranda's Nebraskan father in the book's opening scenes and then finds herself mailing Zabar's lox to his mother every Christmas after their divorce. As Roz transplants her life from Manhattan to Park Slope, and Miranda eventually heads off to college, Nissen never pretends to steer this first novel toward anything more ambitious than a soothing conclusion, but she is such a faithful eavesdropper in her characters' kitchens and minds that readers will find it hard to begrudge the happy ending.



Wild Man: The Life and Times of Daniel Ellsberg, *by Tom Wells (St. Martin's; $32.50).* In 1971, Ellsberg, the former Pentagon aide, leaked the Pentagon Papers—seven thousand pages that documented, among other things, America's covert engagement in Vietnam—to the *Times*, and was transformed practically overnight into one of the most important figures in American public life. Ellsberg was indicted for espionage, but the charges were dropped after John Ehrlichman authorized a break-in of the office of Ellsberg's Beverly Hills psychiatrist. Although Wells uses his subject's eventful career to pry apart the major issues of the era—Vietnam, Watergate, the deterioration of faith in government, and even anti-nuclear activism, which consumed Ellsberg from the late seventies onward—he also spends an inordinate amount of energy establishing Ellsberg's combativeness, his sense of superiority, and his predilection for Swedish stewardesses. The result is a vast, powerful, sometimes bloodthirsty biography that illuminates Ellsberg's times more than his life.

Free Flight, *by James Fallows (PublicAffairs; $25).* After decades of stagnation, small-airplane technology seems poised to make the kinds of advances that revolutionized computers and cars. Fallows envisions an alternative to the hub-and-spoke cattle pens of conventional airline travel: a flexible, affordable, on-demand air-taxi system using existing small airports and soon-to-exist small planes that offer comfort, speed, and safety. His account of the development of two such planes—one of which features a huge parachute that can float the entire craft to a soft landing—combines the excitement of a boy's adventure story with the gadgety pleasure of a Sharper Image catalogue. And his prose is as clear and light as the blue sky of a perfect day for flying.

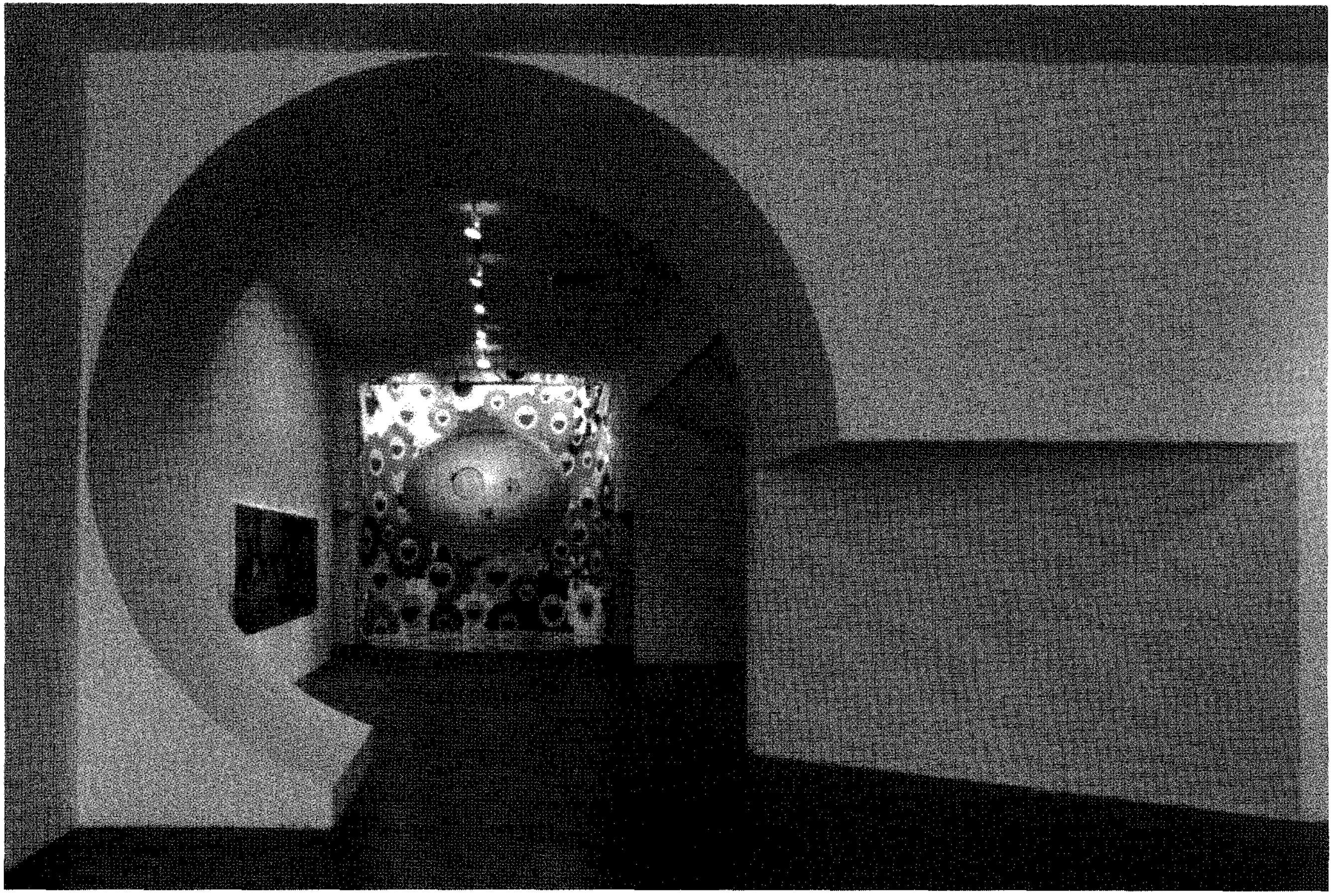
THE ART WORLD

DESERT SONGS

A maverick biennial in Santa Fe.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

All art exhibitions are in themselves works of art. They compose objects in space for enjoyment in time. They embody arguments about those objects. The arguments of mediocre shows are trite. Those of bad shows are condescending to both the objects and the audience, often by way of didactic wall texts. We should not be called upon to think at an art show. Instead, ideas should occur spontaneously, welling up in us as pleasure seeks an accounting. We should never have to wonder why, where, or how an object is presented. The presentation should speak for itself, as art does, by making sense in terms of taste and love.



The aim of Dave Hickey's exhibition "Beau Monde" is to provoke spirited encounters among an idiosyncratic array of artists.

COURTESY HERBER LOTZ/SITE SANTA FE

Entering "Beau Monde: Toward a Redeemed Cosmopolitanism"—the elaborately designed fourth Site Santa Fe Biennial, which is on view until January 6th—the visitor receives a stunning welcome. An overhead projection of a fascinating abstract video is accompanied by a soundtrack of synthesized, Bach-like arpeggios. Beyond it, one glimpses beautiful things in rooms with varied proportions and lighting schemes and the odd curved or colored wall. A window opens onto a specially constructed deck, whose exaggerated perspective leads the eye across a rail yard into infinity. The conventional artified warehouse space of past Santa Fe biennials—windowless white walls, concrete floor, industrial ceiling—is unrecognizable. One is hardly in New Mexico—or in Venice, São Paulo, Kwangju, Pittsburgh, or any other stop on the dismal circuit of periodic shows that regularly convene and enervate the international art crowd.

The curator of "Beau Monde" is the maverick art critic, theorist, and fiction writer Dave Hickey, who teaches at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas. Hickey, who is sixty-two years old, has been an art dealer, a magazine editor, a Nashville musician, and the curator of another polemical group show, the seductive "Ultralounge: The Return of Social Space (With Cocktails)," which opened in Houston in 1998. He is the author of two books of criticism, "The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty" and "Air Guitar: Essays on Art and Democracy," which may be the most influential works of art theory and appreciation published in the last decade. They are surely the most original. A romantic individualist and a philosophical pragmatist, Hickey espouses the oneness of all art whether high or popular, a field with room for both a Tiepolo and a Norman Rockwell. His writings combine mandarin erudition and populist tub-thumping. His heartfelt sentiments and his glinting precision recall one of his intellectual heroes, John Ruskin. Half jokingly, Hickey terms his politics "bleeding-heart libertarian" and his social vision "egalitarian élitism." He is a scourge of establishments and an upholder, with caveats, of commerce as art's least irksome practical arena.

"Beau Monde" advances one big argument—for itself as a model of what an omnibus exhibition should be like—as well as several lesser arguments for the art it displays. The main point succeeds completely. The others invite spirited debate. I've never realized so decisively how much my own tastes differ from those of Hickey (whom I have known for years); nor have I ever been so impressed by his ambition to make art count as an engine of democratic values. "I'm for a volunteer art world," he said to me recently. "As a pragmatist, I believe that knowledge is social, and that art is a sociable activity—people talking in front of objects." He regards formal beauty—"getting it right"—not as an end but as the beginning of art's meaning, which the beholder determines. "Beau Monde" proposes a shift in the art of contemporary exhibitions, turning its back on insider agendas and institutional caution, in favor of a passionate competition among sensibilities and ideas.

The exhibition is small by the norm of biennials, which, in Hickey's words, have become "essentially trade shows for the curators of museums and *kunsthalles* the world over, who arrive at the site in search of internationally certified art installations to fill out their schedules." His riposte in Santa Fe presents forty-one works by twenty-nine artists. Eighteen (mostly from the West Coast and the Southwest) are American-born; four are from England; the remaining five come from Cuba, France, Japan, Switzerland, and Venezuela. Six are filmmakers, among them Edward Ruscha ("Miracle," 1975), Kenneth Anger (the amazing "Kustom Kar Kommandos," 1964), and the English twins Jane and Louise Wilson, who are represented by a stirring montage about the Russian space program. The roster includes ten women, eight artists who are older than sixty (one is an obscure octogenarian abstract painter, Frederick Hammersley, whose career peaked in California four decades ago), and James Lee Byars, a transatlantic dandy from Detroit who died in Egypt, in 1997.

Except for two artists whose vernacular roots are obvious—Gajin Fujita, a Los Angeles ex-graffiti writer who created the show's hip-hoppish logo, and Darryl (Mutt Mutt) Montana, a Louisianan who makes ferociously gorgeous Mardi Gras costumes—the show conceals its demographic spread. "Beau Monde" is partial to artists who, even if they're young, have crossed enough personal and geographic frontiers to sacrifice "identity" to global citizenship. (In this regard, Fujita is delightful for the way in which he blends the wild style of his Hispanic neighborhood with classic Edo geisha scenes that he learned from his artist parents.) The age frontier proves especially porous at a time when many new artists are looking back, past thirty years of post-minimalist orthdoxy, to stylistic modes of the nineteen-sixties. Who would have thought that a shimmering paint-and-wire Op relief by the Venezuelan Jesús Rafael Soto, who was famous for about a minute back then, would look so bracing in 2001? So do paintings by the veteran artists Jo Baer and Bridget Riley.

"Beau Monde" takes as its benchmark what Hickey calls "art at the edge of design." He chose a firm of young Germans based in Los Angeles, Graft Design, for his radical makeover of the Site facility. They came up with an organic layout of distinctive spaces, each keyed to the art selected for it. The show's coups are many: the video and soundtrack at the entrance, by Jennifer Steinkamp and Jimmy Johnson; a vast screen of exquisitely light-sensitive, silvered plastic modules by Jim Isermann, which hangs on the building's façade; an all-white installation by the brilliant glass artist Josiah McElheny; and a big room with chartreuse and mirrored walls that contains the Montana costumes (suspended above amoeboid platforms by Jorge Pardo), the Soto, and an exhilarating walk-in painting/sculpture with found objects, including stacks of obsolete electronic gear from Los Alamos, by Jessica Stockholder.

The high point is a gallery in which four pedestalled ceramic sculptures by Ken Price—enchanting biomorphic shapes with patinas of sonorous, variegated color—face a four-part painting of rhomboid monochrome panels by Ellsworth Kelly. The juxtaposition of two artists who appear worlds apart is at first startling, but the sheer beauty of the works turns the encounter into a summit conference between masters of eloquent form.

At times, the presentations are strained—for example, the overly theatrical illumination of the fine, shy Hammersleys and a luridly pink room that oversells coy photographs of porn-film production by Jeff Burton. A huge, handsome installation by Alexis Smith seems a tad more trouble than it's worth: a colorfully carpeted platform leading to a desert-sunset wall painting and flanked by the words "Heaven for weather. Hell for company." Trying to decide who is being kidded by whom, and to what end, wore me out. I don't share Hickey's enthusiasm for the eccentric Texan surrealist painter Kermit Oliver, or for the effete Byars, whose beams of sugar-white marble have zero presence. And I thoroughly dislike a big, busy, lifeless abstract painting by the Swiss Pia Fries, whose impasto paint-mongering suggests a tin-eyed concession by Hickey to a kind of art—expressive painting—that I suspect doesn't really interest him.

Not for the first time, I was struck by how Hickey's love of art appears to exceed any emotional involvement that he may have with it, so much so that he barely notices the emotional and spiritual qualities—or the lack of them—of artists who please him by virtue of their formal intelligence. ("Design solutions have moral and political ramifications," he said in our conversation.) But a surplus of irrational affection turns out to be the perfect tonic for the lately anemic art of exhibition. Before we can usefully disagree about what we like in art, we need to reëstablish, publicly, the dignity of *liking*. The importance of pleasure in aesthetic experience is so simple and self-evident. How did we reach the point where a forthright assertion of that idea by an art show can seem like a stroke of genius? ♦

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

MOTHER LOVE

"The Deep End" and "The Others."

BY DAVID DENBY

Shooting a thriller in raw daylight is a tough way to develop an atmosphere for blood and mystery. The great forties noirs, for instance, were set indoors and were bathed in a voluptuous melodrama of deep shadows and brilliant white light. But at the beginning of "The Deep End" the camera flies low over Lake Tahoe, picking up the bottomless dark blue of the water, and then, rising, moves into the empyreal stillness and clarity of the California mountains—and the movie immediately casts a spell. The team of Scott McGehee and David Siegel—they write, direct, and produce together—have created their own atmosphere in the lake's rich turquoise blue. Their suspense thriller is about people desperately trying to hide things, even in the clear water. The heroine, Margaret Hall (Tilda Swinton), is a housewife whose Navy-officer husband is away at sea. The oldest of their three children, Beau (Jonathan Tucker), who is a seventeen-year-old college-bound musician, has been hitting the gay bars in Reno. He has a thirtyish lover, Darby (Josh Lucas), a club owner and lowlife who controls people with an insinuating, bullying line of sex talk. Darby and Beau quarrel, and when Darby shows up dead outside the Halls' lakeside home in Tahoe City, Margaret has to protect her boy. With no more than a few minutes' hesitation, she gets to work, disposing of the corpse as if it were a particularly cumbersome household nuisance. Mothers, after all, are always cleaning up after their sons.

"The Deep End" is based on the 1947 novel "The Blank Wall," the same book that inspired Max Ophuls's 1949 film "The Reckless Moment." The author, Elisabeth Sanxay Holding, is now largely forgotten, but in the forties and fifties she was widely read—Raymond Chandler and Alfred Hitchcock were fans—and she may be ripe for revival. In the book, and in the first movie, the wayward adolescent is a girl, and she's having a love affair with a crime-world sleazeball. By updating and resetting the menace in the gay underworld, McGehee and Siegel add something that is as seductive as it is dangerous. After the body is discovered, a handsome and melancholy blackmailer, Alek (Goran Visnjic), shows up at the house with a videotape of Darby and Beau making love. Margaret watches it, in appalled silence. Alek and his older partner, Nagle (Raymond Barry), were owed money by Darby, and now they want the money out of Margaret. It's not quite clear whether there's a sexual relationship between the two men, but we can see that Nagle dominates Alek the same way that Darby tried to dominate Beau. Alek may be a blackmailer, but Margaret finds him attractive; he's young, a little lost, obviously dissatisfied, and he reminds her, perhaps, of her son.

"The Deep End" is propelled by sex and violence, but family life is the source of the movie's strength. The blond wood interiors of the house, light streaming in from all sides, provide a spectacularly attractive middle-class haven. In the movie's moral scheme, the Halls, Californians whose children are all artistic and academically disciplined, are threatened by the chaos pouring out of Nevada, on the other side of the lake. The scheme isn't priggish: the Halls are not saints, and Margaret and Beau do break the law. But at the same time Margaret is worried about such things

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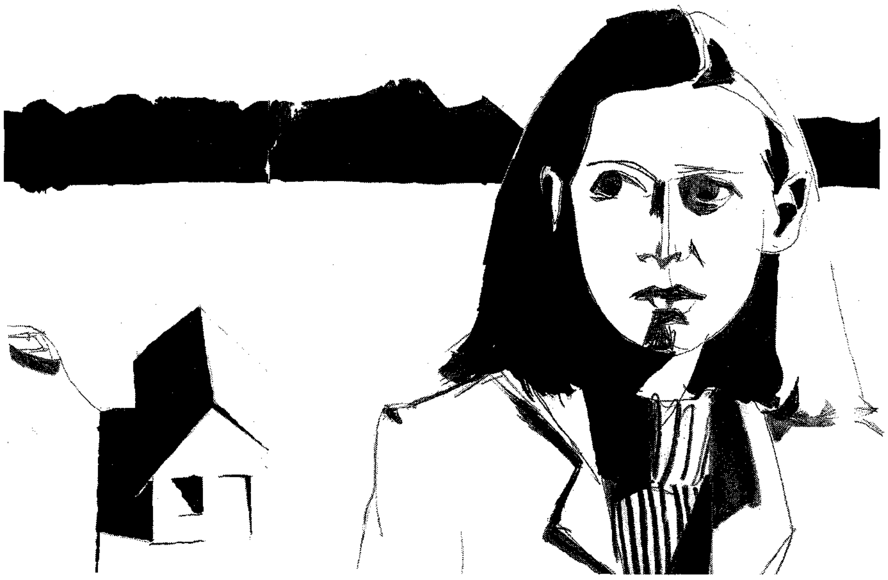
as taking the children to their lessons and looking after her father-in-law, a retired Navy man who is very particular in his ways and notices more than a father-in-law should. In "The Deep End," someone is always walking into a room or looking out a window at the wrong time. The galling interruptions of family life only increase the tension. The narrative places us within Margaret's peril, and within her responsibilities and desires, too. We're complicit in all these things.

Tilda Swinton, who is probably best known for her eccentric, staring-at-the-camera performance in "Orlando," makes Margaret a very organized and decisive woman, a little formal, scrupulous to a fault, and not always likable. Swinton, who is Scottish, wears no makeup and pulls her hair tightly back from her face. We seem to be gazing right into her soul; she has the breathtaking emotional directness and transparency of an Ingmar Bergman star, like Liv Ullmann. As Beau, young Jonathan Tucker—thin lips and a rather severe forehead—is proud, accomplished, and easily hurt, a boy crashing into manhood faster than he wants. The movie is built on the bond between mother and son, which is largely a silent one, since Beau won't talk about his sex life, and Margaret can't tell him about the things she's done to prevent it from destroying him. The two actors stay alert to each other's moods like animals quivering in the woods.

McGehee and Siegel (they earlier made "Suture" together) are very smart fellows, and they trust the camera. They have put the movie together not in big Hollywood style as a series of sensations exploding everywhere and nowhere but as a moment-by-moment immersion in the physical life of the drama. Inside the house, outside the house, in the boathouse next to it, in cars rushing back and forth between Reno and Tahoe City—the movie crisscrosses and churns up its own terrain, and the camera keeps *narrating*, not just recording images. We stay completely involved. The cinematographer, Giles Nuttgens, works in a flowing and liquid style—literally, because that turquoise blue turns up everywhere. The flickering light reflected off the lake warms the walls of the boathouse, where violent quarrels erupt and normal life slips into pathology. "The Deep End" holds us even when it goes a little soft. There's a romantic and fatalistic pull to the relationship of Margaret and the sad-eyed Alek, a hint of doomed, sacrificial longings and multiple redemptions. We stay with the troubled, rhapsodic mood right to the end, even if we reject some of the story. "The Deep End" is heartfelt and beautifully made, and if I were not afraid of slipping into ad-copy patter—not to mention insulting the film with the feebleness of the competition—I would call it the best American movie of 2001. Well, I just did.

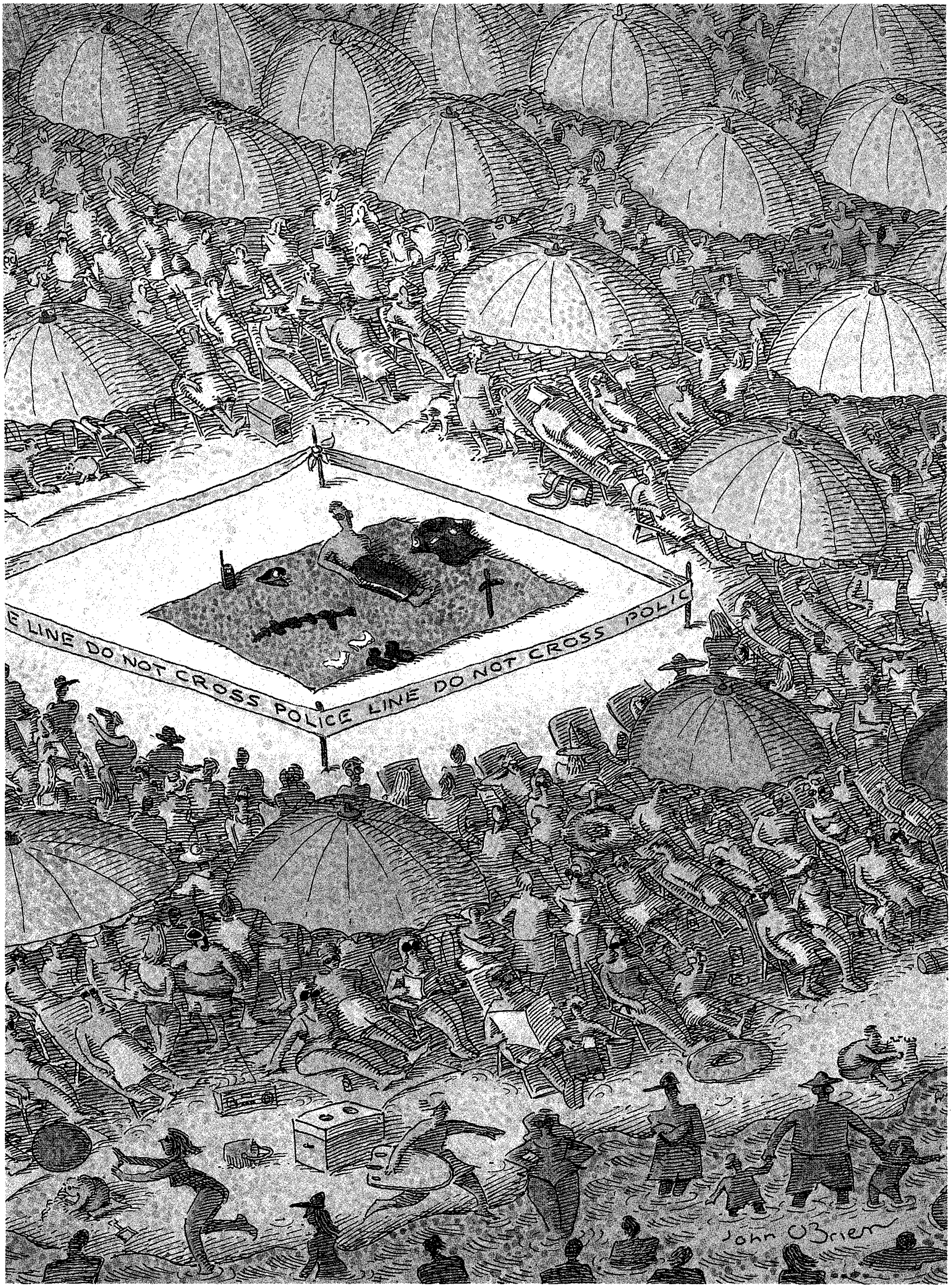
RICCARDO VECCHIO



Tilda Swinton in a thriller set against the clear blue water of Lake Tahoe.

The thrills in the haunted-house picture "The Others" are perhaps a little overdetermined. Nicole Kidman, with a hairdo that makes her look like a red-headed Grace Kelly, plays an upper-class Englishwoman living in a big house on Jersey, in the Channel Islands, at the end of the Second World War. Her husband is off fighting, and she has two young children who are so sensitive to light that the curtains in the house must always be drawn, and anyone passing from room to room must shut one door before opening the next. The electricity is out; the house is cut off from civilization by a fog that won't lift. Is there anything else? I waited in vain for a beast to begin howling on the moors, and I missed a madwoman rattling around in the attic, but there are voices, many voices, and the servants make creepy remarks. In the course of the movie, Nicole Kidman opens and closes more doors than a guard at Sing Sing, and at one exasperating moment she forces herself to enter a room in which some teasing spirit begins and then ceases to play a Chopin waltz. In the movie's best moments, the tremulous anguish of Kidman's character suggests the unhappiness of the governess in Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw," especially since Kidman, like the governess, may be imagining things. The movie was directed by the Spaniard Alejandro Amenábar, who works by suggestion much of the time; he favors ambiguity over outright horror, and the sepulchral gray light of the house and grounds can be elegant. I have limited patience for movies in which beautiful women run around big houses in a state of terror, but "The Others" is extremely skillful. There's nothing cheap in it, as there was in "What Lies Beneath," where the real problem was what lay behind—the heroine kept backing into things. But "The Others" becomes monotonous; it's rather like a sluggish computer game in which movement is limited to one room at a time. And the suggestion, at the end, that the living and the dead must learn to get along with one another, as if they were participants at a United Nations health conference, or neighbors at a local bar, strikes me as a less than satisfying solution to the poltergeist problem. ♦

THE BACK PAGE BY JOHN O'BRIEN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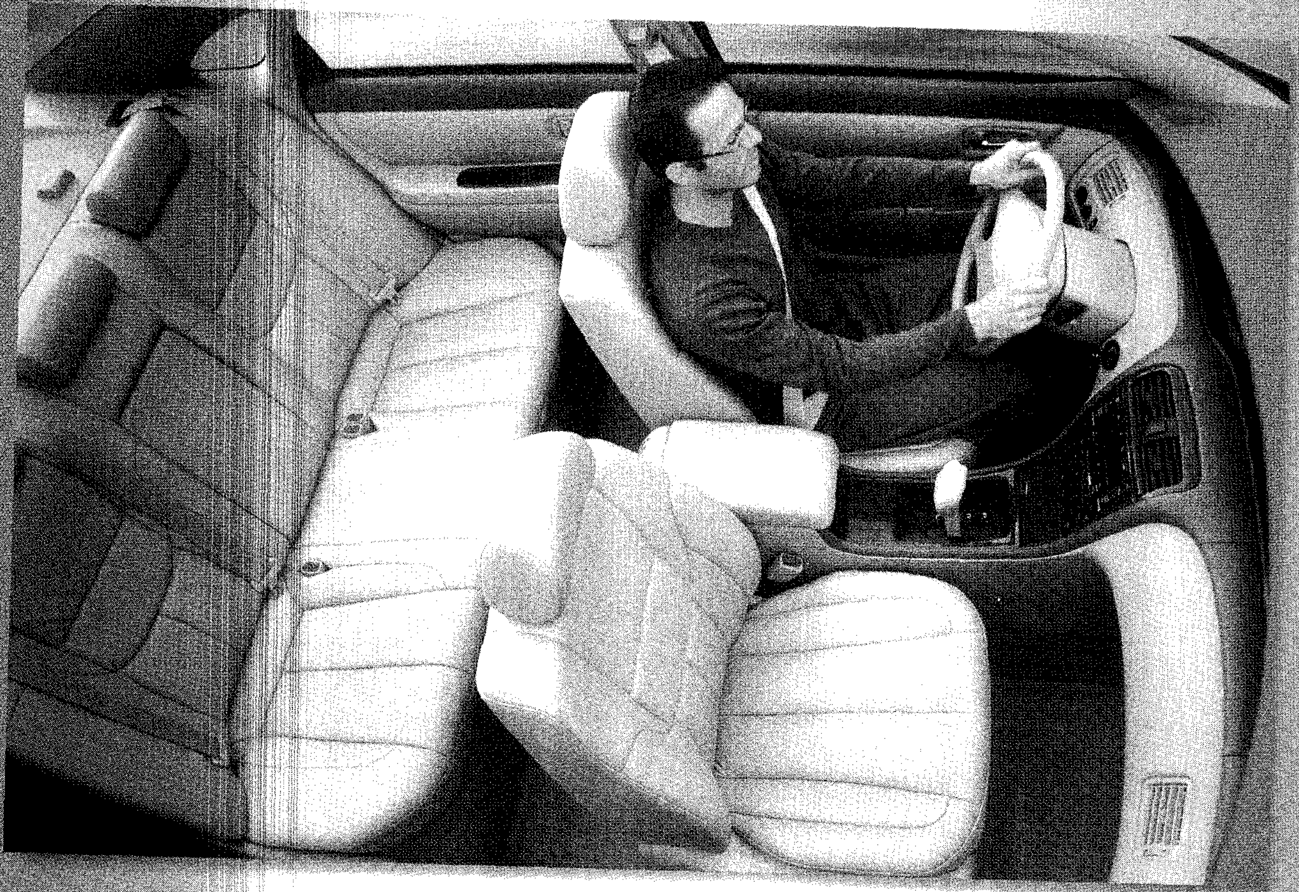

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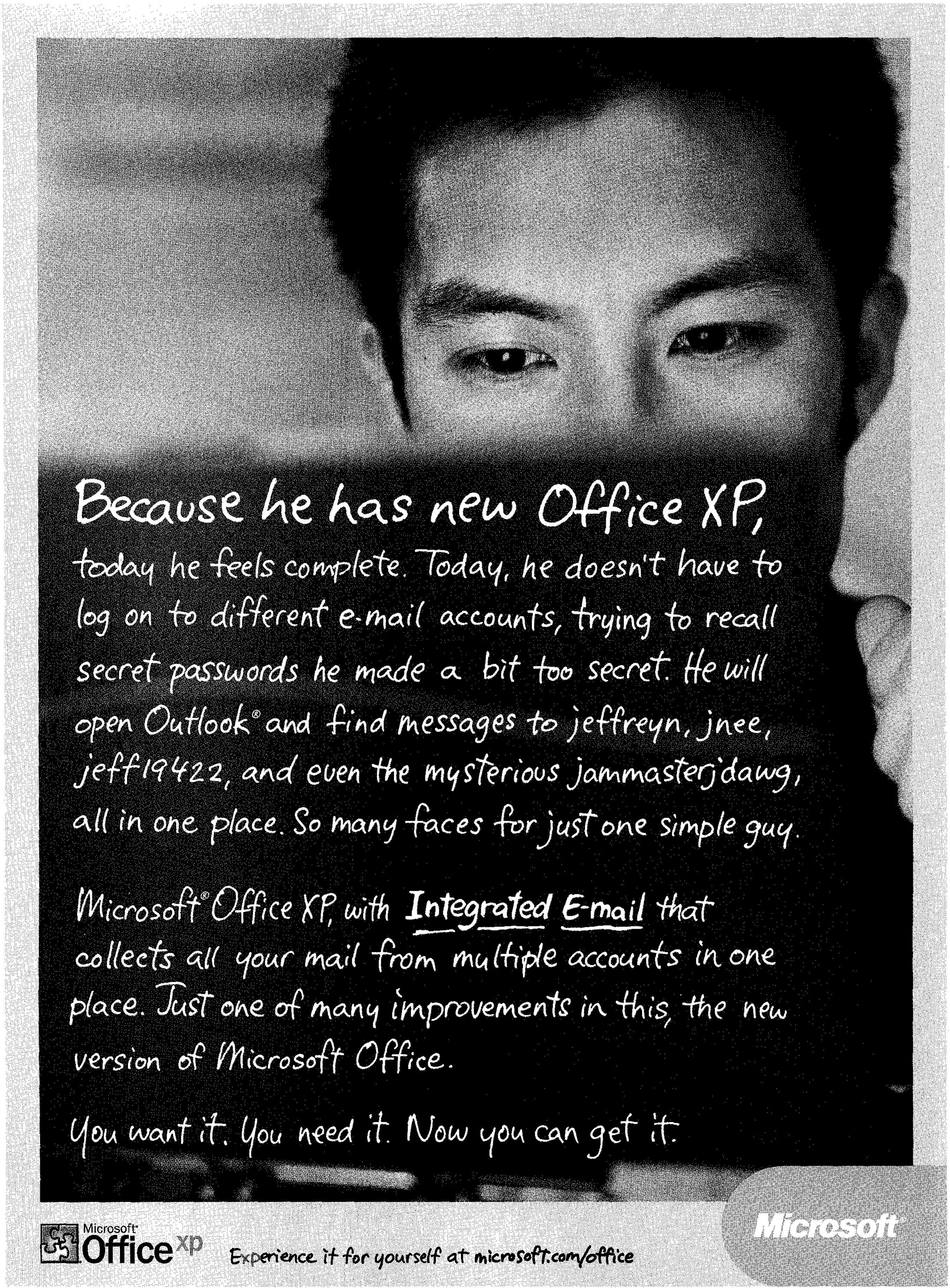

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